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DR. JOHNSON'S

TABLE &

TALK



THE BIBLELOTS.

By J. JOHNSON.



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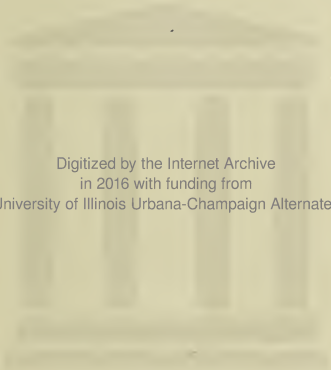
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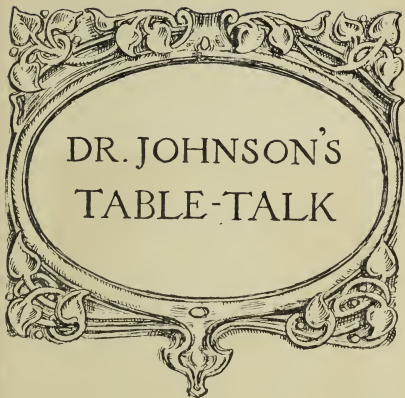
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DR. JOHNSON'S
TABLE-TALK



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INTRODUCTION



AMUEL JOHNSON was born on September 18, 1709, and died on December 13, 1784, at the age of seventy-five years.

He was the eldest child of a bookseller, Michael Johnson, who carried on his business and dwelt in the market-place opposite St. Mary's Church at Lichfield. At the age of three he was 'touched for the king's evil' by Queen Anne in London—the last instance, it is believed, of this ceremony being performed in England. Samuel was educated at a dame school; then by Tom Brown; later at the local grammar-school, Stourbridge School, and at Pembroke College, Oxford University. He left Oxford in 1731, at the end of which year his father died, after Samuel's three years' residence there; and in the following year young Johnson walked to Market Bosworth to become a teacher. His stay here was of short duration. After this he passed some time at

Heywood as a private tutor. Subsequently he passed backwards and forwards between Lichfield and Birmingham. At the latter place he made the acquaintance of Mrs. Porter, and married her at Derby on July 9, 1735. They were united for seventeen years, when, in 1752, Mrs. Johnson died, in Gough Square, after a long period of 'perpetual illness and perpetual opium.' During his married life Johnson set up a school at Edial Hall, and removed to London, where he resided until his death. He published during his wife's life—which closed about the same time as *The Rambler*, and while Johnson was engaged upon his Dictionary—several works which are specified in a later paragraph.

In 1755 the degree of Master of Arts was conferred upon him by his university, which gave him his D.C.L. degree just twenty years later. He became a Dublin LL.D. in 1765.

Johnson's places of residence in London were Gough Square (1748-1759), where he compiled the Dictionary, and wrote *The Rambler*, the major portion of *The Idler*, and *Rasselas*. In March 1759 he removed to Staple Inn, but in December of the same year he dwelt in Gray's Inn, remaining there until 1760, when he removed to chambers on the first floor of No. 1 Inner Temple Lane. There he stayed until 1766, in which year he took a house in Johnson's Court.

His many associations must not, through

the exigencies of space, be treated of here; but estimates of his character and literary work will be slightly touched upon, and some bibliographical data presented.

One of our latter-day editors of this 'true-born Englishman,' Dr. G. Birkbeck Hill, has stated with great accuracy that 'no man has ever held the same place as Johnson,' for 'he was the unrivalled talker, the master of the art of life, the oracle whom all men could consult, the dread of the fool and the affected, the founder of a great school of truthfulness and accuracy, the profound teacher of morality. Death laid his hand on him in vain; for though Johnson was gone, the land became more and more Johnsonised. Great though his fame was in his lifetime, it is still greater in his death. His written wisdom was indeed great, but it is in his spoken wisdom that he lives.'

Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is, to quote Burke, 'a greater monument to Johnson's fame than all his writings put together'; and, to again use Dr. Hill's words, it had 'for its subject a man whose character was noble in itself, and was marked in the deepest and strongest lines. Striking and even wonderful though this character was, yet it seems to be understood only by the English-speaking race. His wit, his humour, his strong common-sense, his truthfulness, his roughness, his tenderness, are known to

us and us alone. Of all Englishmen he was the most English—in his bad qualities as well as in his good, in his prejudices as well as in his wisdom.'

The same writer, in the course of a lengthy essay, further crystallises Johnson's characteristics and philosophy as follows:—'The most striking quality in Johnson was his wisdom, his knowledge of the whole art of life. If common-sense can be thought of as invested with majesty, it is seen in all its stateliness much more in the dictionary-maker than in the Lord Chancellor. Round about his common-sense and his tenderness, and mingled with them in endless variety, his humour and his wit are ever playing. He is wholly free from all affectation, all cynicism, all moroseness, all peevishness. He is as far removed from the savageness of Swift as from the querulous irritability of Carlyle. He never snarls and he never whines. Life, he holds, is unhappy; it must be unhappy. He accepts life as it is. The worst thing of all is to sit down and whine. He dislikes all affectation. It is this freedom from affectation which gives such weight and such interest to his criticisms. He is never afraid to speak what he holds to be the truth, however great may be the author whom he reviews. He is no lover of singularity. He is not ashamed to own his natural feelings. In the art of the management of the mind

he is one of the greatest masters. He is full of the most ardent curiosity. In all his greatness it is along the common ways of men that he moves. In every circle he is the first, yet the companions of his home life are a poor blind lady and an obscure practiser in physic. He neither lives in a mist, nor does he ever try for a single moment to throw one round him. He thinks clearly, and he states with perfect clearness what he thinks. It is true that he often talks paradox, but whether he is right or wrong he is as clear as the day.'

Goldsmith said that 'Johnson to be sure has a rough manner, but no man alive has a better heart. He has nothing of the bear but the skin.' Carlyle describes him as 'a mass of genuine manhood,' while Adam Smith characterised him as 'a brute,' and Curran writes of him as 'a superstitious and brutish bigot,' who had, 'with the exception of the English Dictionary, done more injury to the English language than even Gibbon himself.' Horace Walpole expressed the opinion that 'with a lumber of learning and some strong parts, Johnson was an odious and mean character. His manners were sordid, supercilious, and brutal; his style ridiculously bombastic and vicious; and, in one word, with all the pedantry, he had all the gigantic littleness of a country schoolmaster.'

Respecting his 'pomp of diction,' it has been pointed out that this 'which has been objected to in Johnson was first assumed in *The Rambler*. His Dictionary was going on at the same time, and in the course of that work, as he grew familiar with technical and scholastic words, he thought that the bulk of his readers were equally learned, or at least would admire the splendour and dignity of the style. And yet it is well known that he praised in Cowley the ease and unaffected structure of the sentences.'

In his monograph on Johnson, Dr. Leslie Stephen, in dealing with the mannerisms of the Doctor, says:—'Johnson's sentences seem to be contorted, as his gigantic limbs used to twitch, by a kind of mechanical spasmodic action. The most obvious peculiarity is the tendency, which he noticed himself, to "use too big words and too many of them." . . . It was not, however, the mere bigness of the words that distinguished his style, but a peculiar love of putting the abstract for the concrete, of using awkward inversions, and of balancing his sentences in a monotonous rhythm, which gives the appearance, as it sometimes corresponds to the reality, of elaborate logical discrimination. With all its faults the style has the merits of masculine directness. The inversions are not such as to complicate the construction. As Boswell remarks, he never

uses a parenthesis; and his style, though ponderous and wearisome, is as transparent as the smarter snip-snap of Macaulay. . . . Johnson's style is characteristic of the individual and of the epoch. The preceding generation had exhibited the final triumph of common-sense over the pedantry of a decaying scholasticism.'

The wisdom displayed in the numerous products of Johnson's pen was very great, 'but it is in his spoken wisdom that he lives'; and Dr. Stephen points out that 'the only writing in which we see a distinct reflection of Johnson's talk is in the *Lives of the Poets*. The excellence of that book is of the same kind as the excellence of his conversation.'

Wraxall wrote of Johnson: 'I consider him as the most illustrious and universal man of letters whom I have personally known. Adam Smith, Jacob Bryant, and Horace Walpole, all of whom I knew, eminent as were their talents, could not on the whole sustain a competition with Johnson'; and Garrick says that 'Rabelais and all other wits are nothing compared to him. You may be diverted by them, but Johnson gives you a forcible hug and squeezes out of you whether you will or no.'

As illustrating the greatly varied character of Johnson's writings, and for bibliographical purposes, there follows a list of the

Doctor's writings arranged in the order of publication:—A Voyage to Abyssinia, by Father Jerome Lobo (translation), 1735; London, a poem, 1738; A Complete Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage, 1739; Marmor Norfolciense, 1739; Life of Richard Savage, 1744; Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, 1745; The Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language, 1747; The Vanity of Human Wishes, a poem, 1749; Irene, a tragedy, 1749; The Rambler, 1750-2; Dictionary of the English Language, 1755; The Idler, 1758-1761; The Prince of Abyssinia (Rasselas), 1759; The Review of a Free Inquiry, 1759: Preface to his edition of Shakespeare, 1765; The False Alarm, 1770; Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands, 1771; The Patriot, 1774; Taxation no Tyranny, 1775; A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, 1775; The Convict's Address, 1777; Works of the English Poets (biographical and critical introductions), 1779-81; Poetical Works, 1785; The Life of Dr. Walls, 1785; Prayers and Meditations, 1785; Memoirs of Charles Frederick, King of Prussia, 1786; Debates in Parliament, 1787; The Works of Samuel Johnson, 1787; Sermon written for the Funeral of his Wife, 1788; Letters to and from the late Samuel Johnson, 1788; Sermons on different subjects, 1788-9; Letter to the Earl of Chesterfield, 1790; A

Conversation between King George III. and Dr. Johnson, 1790; Life of Samuel Johnson, written by himself, 1805; A Diary of a Journey into North Wales, 1816. As Johnson died in 1784, it will be seen that his poetical works and twelve other literary productions were issued posthumously, and about twenty-two works were associated with his name during his lifetime.

Those who would pursue the subject further are referred to the Johnson Bibliography, by Mr. J. P. Anderson, of the British Museum Library, which is in Lieut.-Col. F. Grant's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, first published in the 'Great Writers' series in 1887.

Under various titles—'Johnsoniana' and 'Beauties'—two selections of six or seven editions were published in Johnson's time; others—'Johnsoniana,' 'Beauties,' and 'Table-talk,' and new editions of the earlier *Ana*—came later, and well down into the present century; and other volumes of extracts by Mrs. Napier, Messrs. A. Howard, W. P. Page, W. A. Clouston, Drs. Macaulay and Birkbeck Hill, and anonymous editors, appeared between 1834 and 1888.

The present selection is from many of Dr. Johnson's writings. These are specified at the foot of each example of the wit and the wisdom of the Doctor. It will be noticed that the selections are arranged in alpha-

betical order according to subjects in the front part of this booklet; and an Index of Subject-headings is furnished, for ready reference, and Indices of Names, at the end.

It is hoped that the publication of this collection of Johnsoniana may induce readers to renew their interest in the author and his productions, or may create a feeling which will lead them to make acquaintance with the varied writing of the burly Doctor.

J. P. B.





CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,	V
PART I.—APHORISMS, ETC.,	I
PART II.—ANECDOTES,	105
PART III.—ESTIMATES OF AUTHORS,	129
SUBJECT INDEX TO PART I.,	146
INDEX NOMINUM TO PART II.,	149
INDEX NOMINUM TO PART III.,	150





TABLE-TALK OF DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

PART I APHORISMS, ETC.

ABILITY

IT was well observed by Pythagoras, that ability and necessity dwell near each other.

Idler.

ACTIONS

THINGS may be seen differently, and differently shown; but actions are visible, though motives are secret.

Life of Cowley.

ADVERSITY

ADVERSITY has ever been considered as the state in which a man most easily becomes acquainted with himself; and this effect it must produce, by with-

drawing flatterers, whose business it is to hide our weaknesses from us; or by giving loose to malice, and licence to reproach; or, at least, by cutting off those pleasures which called us away from meditation on our own conduct, and repressing that pride which too easily persuades us that we merit whatever we enjoy.

Rambler.

ADVICE

IF we consider the manner in which those who assume the office of directing the conduct of others execute their undertaking, it will not be very wonderful that their labours, however zealous or affectionate, are frequently useless. For, what is the advice that is commonly given? A few general maxims, enforced with vehemence and inculcated with importunity; but failing for want of particular reference and immediate application.

Rambler.

AFFECTATION

AFFECTATION naturally counterfeits those excellences which are placed at the greatest distance from possibility of attainment, because, knowing our own defects, we eagerly endeavour to supply them with artificial excellence.

Rambler.

AFFECTATION is to be always distinguished from *hypocrisy*, as being the art of counterfeiting those qualities which we might with innocence and safety be known to want. Hypocrisy is the necessary burthen of villainy: Affectation part of the chosen trappings of folly; the one completes a villain, the other only finishes a fop.

Rambler.

AGE

HE that would pass the latter part of his life with honour and decency, must, when he is *young*, consider that he shall one day be *old*, and remember, when he is *old*, that he has once been *young*.

Rambler.

AN old age unsupported with matter for discourse and meditation, is much to be dreaded. No state can be more destitute than that of him, who, when the delights of sense forsake him, has no pleasures of the mind.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

ANTICIPATION

WHATEVER advantage we snatch beyond a certain portion allotted us by nature, is like money spent before it is due,

which at the time of regular payment, will be missed and regretted.

Idler.

APHORISMS

WE frequently fall into error and folly, not because the true principles of action are not known, but because, for a time, they are not remembered; he may therefore be justly numbered amongst the benefactors of mankind, who contracts the great rules of life into short sentences, that may be easily impressed on the memory, and taught by frequent recollection to recur habitually to the mind.

Rambler.

APPARITIONS

A TOTAL disbelief of apparitions is adverse to the opinion of the existence of the soul between death and the last day. The question simply is, whether departed spirits ever have the power of making themselves perceptible to us. A man who thinks he has seen an apparition can only be convinced himself; his authority will not convince another; and his conviction, if rational, must be founded on being told something which cannot be known but by supernatural means. (See also GHOSTS.)

Boswell's Johnson.

ARMY

AN army, especially a defensive army, multiplies itself. The contagion of enterprise spreads from one heart to another; zeal for a native, or detestation for a foreign sovereign; hope of sudden greatness or riches, friendship or emulation between particular men, or what are perhaps more general and powerful, desire of novelty, and impatience of inactivity, fill a camp with adventurers, add rank to rank, and squadron to squadron.

Memoirs of the King of Prussia.

AUTHORSHIP

IT is not easy for any man to write upon literature, or common life, so as not to make himself known to those with whom he familiarly converses, and who are acquainted with his track of study, his favourite topics, his peculiar notions, and his habitual phrases.

Life of Addison.

THE two most engaging powers of an author, are to make *new* things familiar, and familiar things *new*.

Life of Pope.

AVARICE

FEW listen without a desire of conviction to those who advise them to spare their money.

Idler.

AVARICE is always poor, but poor by her own fault.

Idler.

BEAUTY

IN the works of nature, if we compare one species with another, all are equally beautiful, and preference is given from custom, or some association of ideas; and in creatures of the same species, beauty is the medium or centre of all its various forms.

Idler.

BEAUTY without kindness dies unenjoyed and undelighting.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

NEITHER man nor woman will have much difficulty to tell how *beauty makes riches pleasant*, except by declaring ignorance of what every one knows, and confessing insensibility of what every one feels.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

IT is an observation countenanced by Shakespeare, and some of our best writers, that no woman can ever be offended with the mention of her beauty.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

THE bloom and softness of the female sex are not to be expected among the lower classes of life, whose faces are exposed to the rudeness of the climate, and whose features are sometimes contracted by want, and sometimes hardened by blasts. Supreme beauty is seldom found in cottages, or workshops, even where no real hardships are suffered. To expand the human face to its full perfection, it seems necessary that the mind should co-operate by placidness of content, or consciousness of superiority.

Western Islands.

BENEVOLENCE

THAT benevolence is always strongest which arises from participation of the same pleasures, since we are naturally most willing to revive in our minds the memory of persons with whom the idea of enjoyment is connected.

Rambler.

BOOKS

BOOKS,' says Bacon, '*can never teach the use of books.*' The student must learn by commerce with mankind to reduce his speculations to practice, and accommodate his knowledge to the purposes of life.

Rambler.

NO man should think so highly of himself, as to imagine he could receive no lights from books, nor so meanly, as to believe he can discover nothing but what is to be learned from them.

Life of Dr. Boerhaave.

BREEDING

ADVENTITIOUS accomplishments may be possessed by all ranks; but one may easily distinguish the *born gentleman*.

BURLESQUE

BURLESQUE consists in a disproportion between the style and the sentiments, or between the adventitious sentiments and the fundamental subject. It therefore, like all bodies compounded of heterogeneous parts, contains in it a principle of corruption. All disproportion is unnatural, and from what is unnatural we can derive only the

pleasure which novelty produces. We admire it a while as a strange thing; but when it is no longer strange, we perceive its deformity. It is a kind of artifice, which, by frequent repetition, detects itself; and the reader, learning in time what he is to expect, lays down his book; as the spectator turns away from a second exhibition of those tricks, of which the only use is, to show that they can be played.

Life of Butler.

BUSINESS

IT very seldom happens to a man that his business is his pleasure. What is done from necessity, is so often to be done when against the present inclination, and so often fills the mind with anxiety, that an habitual dislike steals upon us, and we shrink involuntarily from the remembrance of our task. This is the reason why almost every one wishes to quit his employment: he does not like another state, but is disgusted with his own.

Idler.

WHOEVER is engaged in a multiplicity of business, must transact much by substitution, and leave something to hazard; and he that attempts to do all, will waste his life in doing little.

Idler.

CALAMITY

DIFFERENCES are never so effectually laid asleep, as by some common calamity. An enemy unites all to whom he threatens danger.

Rambler.

CENSURE

CENSURE is willingly indulged, because it always implies some superiority. Men please themselves with imagining that they have made a deeper search, or wider survey than others, and detected faults and follies which escape vulgar observation.

Rambler.

THOSE who raise envy will easily incur censure.

Idler.

CHANGE

ALL change, not evidently for the better, alarms a mind taught by experience to distrust itself.

Vision of Theodore.

CHARACTER

IN cities, and yet more in courts, the minute discriminations of character, which distinguish one man from another, are, for the most part, effaced. The pecu-

liarities of temper and opinion are gradually worn away by promiscuous converse, as angular bodies and uneven surfaces lose their points and asperities, by frequent attrition against one another, and approach by degrees to uniform rotundity.

Rambler.

THE opinions of every man must be learned from himself. Concerning his practice it is safest to trust the evidence of others. Where those testimonies concur, no higher degree of certainty can be obtained of his character.

Life of Sir Thomas Browne.

CHARITY

CHARITY would lose its name were it influenced by so mean a motive as human praise.

.

TO do the best can seldom be the lot of man; it is sufficient if, when opportunities are presented, he is ready to do good. How little virtue could be practised if beneficence were to wait always for the most proper objects, and the noblest occasions; occasions that may never happen, and objects that may never be found?

.

THAT charity is best of which the consequences are most extensive.

Introduction to the Proceedings of the Committee for Cloathing French Prisoners.

OF Charity it is superfluous to observe, that it could have no place if there were no want; for of a virtue which could not be practised, the omission could not be culpable. Evil is not only the occasional, but the efficient cause of charity. We are incited to the relief of misery, by the consciousness that we have the same nature with the sufferer; that we are in danger of the same distresses; and may sometimes implore the same assistance.

Idler.

CIVILITY

THE civilities of the great are never thrown away.

Memoirs of the King of Prussia.

CLERICAL LIFE

SIR, the life of a parson, of a conscientious clergyman, is not easy. I have always considered a clergyman as the father of a larger family than he is able to maintain. I would rather have Chancery suits upon my hands than the cure of souls. No, sir, I do not envy a clergyman's life as an easy life, nor do I envy the clergyman who makes it an easy life.

COMPLAINT

THE usual fortune of complaint is to excite contempt more than pity.

Life of Cowley.

WHAT cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

Rasselas.

THOUGH seldom any good is gotten by complaint, yet we find few forbear to complain but those who are afraid of being reproached as the authors of their own miseries.

Idler.

CONJECTURE AND KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE of all kinds is good. Conjecture as to things useful is good; but conjecture as to things which it would be useless to know—such as whether men went upon all-fours—is very idle.

CONTEMPT

CONTEMPT is a kind of gangrene, which if it seizes one part of a character corrupts all the rest by degrees.

Life of Blackmore.

CONTENT

THE foundation of content must spring up in a man's own mind; and he who has so little knowledge of human nature as

to seek happiness by changing anything but his own disposition, will waste his life in fruitless efforts, and multiply the griefs which he purposes to remove.

Rambler.

COURAGE

PERSONAL courage is the quality of highest esteem among a warlike and uncivilised people; and with the ostentatious display of courage are closely connected promptitude of offence, and quickness of resentment.

Rambler.

WE may as easily make wrong estimates of our own courage, as our own humility; by mistaking a sudden effervescence of imagination for settled resolution.

Life of Sir Thomas Browne.

CREDULITY

OF all kinds of credulity the most obstinate and wonderful is that of political zealots; of men who being numbered they know not how, or why, in any of the parties that divide a state, resign the use of their own eyes and ears, and resolve to believe nothing that does not favour those whom they profess to follow.

Idler.

CREDULITY on one part is a strong temptation to deceit on the other.

Western Islands.

WE are inclined to believe those whom we do not know, because they never have deceived us.

Idler.

CRITICISM

TO choose the *best* amongst *many good*, is one of the most hazardous attempts of criticism.

Life of Cowley.

WHAT Baudius says of Erasmus seems applicable to many (*critics*)—*Magis habuit quod fugeret, quam quod sequeretur*. They determine rather what to condemn than what to approve.

Life of Milton.

THE care of the *theatrical critic* should be, to distinguish error from inability, faults of inexperience from defects of nature. Action irregular and turbulent may be reclaimed; vociferation vehement and confused may be restrained and modulated: the stalk of the tyrant may become the gait of a man; the yell of inarticulate distress may be reduced to human lamentation. All these faults should be, for a time, over-

looked, and afterwards censured with gentleness and candour. But if in an actor there appears an utter vacancy of meaning, a frigid equality, a stupid languor, a torpid apathy; the greatest kindness that can be shown him, is a speedy sentence of expulsion.

Idler.

THAT a proper respect should be paid to the rules of criticism will be very readily allowed; but there is always an appeal from *criticism to nature*.

Preface to Shakespeare.

CUNNING

CUNNING has effect from the credulity of others, rather than from the abilities of those who are cunning. It requires no extraordinary talents to lie and deceive.

Boswell's Johnson.

CURIOSITY

CURIOSITY, like all other desires, produces pain as well as pleasure.

Rambler.

CURIOSITY is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect. Every advance into knowledge opens new prospects, and produces new incitements to further progress.

Rambler.

CURIOSITY is the thrift of the soul ; it inflames and torments us, and makes us taste everything with joy, however otherwise insipid, by which it may be quenched.

Rambler.

CUSTOM

ESTABLISHED custom is not easily broken, till some great event shakes the whole system of things, and life seems to recommence upon new principles.

Western Islands.

CUSTOM is commonly too strong for the most resolute resolver, though furnished for the assault with all the weapons of philosophy. ‘He that endeavours to free himself from an ill habit,’ says Bacon, ‘must not change too much at a time, lest he should be discouraged by difficulty ; nor too little, for then he will but make slow advances.’

Idler.

IT was perhaps ordained by Providence, to hinder us from tyrannising over one another, that no individual should be of such importance, as to cause by his retirement or death any chasm in the world.

Rambler.

DEATH

NO wise man will be contented to die if he thinks he is to go into a state of punishment. Nay, no wise man will be contented to die if he thinks he is to fall into annihilation; for however unhappy any man's existence may be, he yet would rather have it than not exist at all. No; there is no rational principle by which a man can die contented, but a trust in the mercy of God through the merits of Jesus Christ.

Some people are not afraid [of death], because they look upon salvation as the effect of an absolute decree, and think they feel in themselves the marks of sanctification. Others, and those the most rational in my opinion, look upon salvation as conditional, and as they never can be sure they have complied with the conditions, they are afraid.

Boswell's Johnson.

DECEPTION

DECEIT and falsehood, whatever conveniences they may for a time promise or produce, are in the sum of life obstacles to happiness. Those who profit by the cheat distrust the deceiver, and the act by which kindness was sought puts an end to confidence.

Notes on Shakespeare.

DECEPTION, SELF-

THERE is an art of sophistry by which men have deluded their own consciences, by persuading themselves, that what would be criminal in others, is virtuous in them ; as if the obligations which are laid upon us by a higher power, can be overruled by obligations which we lay upon ourselves.

Notes upon Shakespear.

DEPENDENCE

THERE is no state more contrary to the dignity of wisdom than perpetual and unlimited dependence, in which the understanding lies useless, and every motion is received from external impulse. Reason is the great distinction of human nature, the faculty by which we approach to some degree of association with celestial intelligences ; but as the excellence of every power appears only in its operations, not to have reason, and to have it useless and unemployed, is nearly the same.

Rambler.

WHEREVER there is wealth, there will be dependence and expectation ; and wherever there is dependence, there will be an emulation of servility.

Rambler,

THE dependant who consults delicacy in himself, very little consults his own tranquillity.

Rambler.

DESIRE

SOME desire is necessary to keep life in motion ; and he whose real wants are supplied, must admit those of fancy.

Rasselas.

THE desires of man increase with his acquisitions—every step which he advances brings something within his view, which he did not see before, and which, as soon as he sees it, he begins to want. Where necessity ends, curiosity begins ; and no sooner are we supplied with everything that nature can demand, than we sit down to contrive artificial appetites.

Idler.

DEVOTION

SOME men's minds are so divided between heaven and earth, that they pray for the prosperity of guilt, while they deprecate its punishment.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

DIFFICULTY

NOTHING is difficult, when gain and honour unite their influence.

Falkland Islands.

DILIGENCE

DILIGENCE is never wholly lost.

Life of Collins.

DILIGENCE in employments of less consequence is the most successful introduction to greater enterprises.

Life of Drake.

DISGUISE

DISGUISE can gratify no longer than it deceives.

Life of Somerville.

DUPLICITY

IT is generally the fate of a *double dealer* to *lose* his power, and *keep* his enemies.

Life of Swift.

DUTY

WHEN we act according to our duty, we commit the event to Him by whose laws our actions are governed, and who will suffer none to be finally punished for obedience. But when in prospect of some good, whether natural or moral, we break the rules

prescribed to us, we withdraw from the direction of superior wisdom, and take all consequences upon ourselves.

Rasselas.

EDUCATION

THE knowledge of external nature, and of the sciences which that knowledge requires, or includes, is not the great, or the frequent business of the human mind. Whether we provide for action, or conversation; whether we wish to be useful, or pleasing; the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong. The next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples, which may be said to embody truth, and prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and justice are virtues and excellences of all times, and all places. We are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary, and at leisure.

Life of Milton.

I AM always for getting a boy forward in his learning, for that is sure good. I would let him at first read *any* English book which happens to engage his attention; because you have done a great deal when you have brought him to have entertain-

ment from a book. He'll get better books afterwards.

EMPLOYMENT

EMPLOYMENT is the great instrument of intellectual dominion. The mind cannot retire from its enemy into total vacancy, or turn aside from one object, but by passing to another. The gloomy and the resentful are always found among those who have *nothing to do*, or who *do nothing*. We must be busy about good, or evil, and he to whom the *present* offers nothing, will often be looking backward on the *past*.

Idler.

EMULATION

WHATEVER is done skilfully, appears to be done with ease; and art, when it is once matured to habit, vanishes from observation. We are therefore more powerfully excited to *emulation* by those who have attained the highest degree of excellence, and whom we can therefore with least reason hope to equal.

Rambler.

ENQUIRY

IN the zeal of enquiry we do not always reflect on the silent encroachments of time, or remember that no man is in more danger of doing little, than he who flatters himself with abilities to do all.

Treatise on the Longitude.

ENVY

HE that knows himself despised, will always be envious; and still more envious and malevolent, if he is condemned to live in the presence of those who despise him.

Rasselas.

EQUALITY, HUMAN

SO far is it from being true that men are naturally equal, that no two people can be half an hour together but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other.

ERROR

'ERRORS,' says Dryden, 'flow upon the surface'; but there are some who will fetch them from the bottom.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

ESTEEM

TO raise esteem, we must benefit others; to procure love, we must please them.

Rambler.

EVIL

NO evil is insupportable, but that which is accompanied with consciousness of wrong.

Rasselas.

ESTIMABLE and useful qualities joined with an evil disposition, give that evil disposition power over others, who, by admiring the virtue, are betrayed to the malevolence. The Tatler, mentioning the sharpers of his time, observes, 'that some of them are men of such elegance and knowledge, that a young man, who falls in their way, is betrayed as much by his judgment as his passions.'

Notes upon Shakespeare.

EXAMPLE

EVERY man, in whatever station, has, or endeavours to have, his followers, admirers, and imitators; and has therefore the influence of his example to watch with care; he ought to avoid not only crimes, but the appearance of crimes, and not only to practise virtue, but to applaud, countenance, and support it; for it is possible, for want of attention, we may teach others faults from which ourselves are free, or, by a cowardly desertion of a cause, which we ourselves approve, may pervert those who fix their eyes upon us, and having no rule of their own to guide their course, are easily misled by the aberrations of that example which they choose for their directions.

Rambler.

EXCELLENCE

THOSE who attain any excellence, commonly spend life in one pursuit; for excellence is not often gained upon easier terms.

Life of Pope.

THERE is a vigilance of observation, and accuracy of distinction, which books and precepts cannot confer; and from this almost all original and native excellence proceeds.

Preface to Shakespeare.

THEY whose excellence of any kind has been loudly celebrated, are ready to conclude that their powers are universal.

Preface to Shakespeare.

EXPECTATION

EXPECTATION, when once her wings are expanded, easily reaches heights which performance never will attain; and when she has mounted the summit of perfection, derides her follower, who dies in the pursuit.

Plan of an English Dictionary.

FAME

HE that is loudly praised, will be clamorously censured. He that rises hastily into fame, will be in danger of sinking suddenly into oblivion.

Idler.

THE memory of mischief is no desirable fame.

Rasselas.

THE true satisfaction which is to be drawn from the consciousness that we shall share the attention of future times, must arise from the hope, that with our names, our virtues shall be propagated, and that those whom we cannot benefit in our lives, may receive instruction from our example, and incitement from our renown.

Rambler.

FAME is a shuttlecock. If it be struck only at one end of the room it will soon fall to the ground. To keep it up it must be struck at both ends.

Western Islands.

FANCY

THE fanciful sports of great minds are never without some advantage to knowledge.

Life of Sir Thomas Browne.

FAVOUR

FAVOURS of every kind are doubled when they are speedily conferred.

Rambler.

FEAR

ALL fear is in itself painful; and when it conduces not to safety, is painful without use.

Rambler.

FEAR is implanted in us as a preservative from evil ; but its duty, like that of other passions, is not to overbear reason, but to assist it ; nor should it be suffered to tyrannise in the imagination, to raise phantoms of horror, or beset life with super-numerary distresses.

Rambler.

FLATTERY

THE flatterer is not often detected ; for an honest mind is not apt to suspect, and no one exerts the power of discernment with much vigour when self-love favours the deceit.

Rambler.

IT is necessary to the success of flattery, that it be accommodated to particular circumstances, or characters, and enter the heart on that side where the passions stand ready to receive it.

Rambler.

IN order that all men may be taught to speak truth, it is necessary that all likewise should learn to hear it ; for no species of falsehood is more frequent than flattery, to which the coward is betrayed by fear, the dependant by interest, and the friend by tenderness. Those who are neither servile, nor timorous, are yet desirous to

bestow pleasure ; and while unjust demands of praise continue to be made, there will always be some whom hope, fear, or kindness will dispose to pay them.

Rambler.

FOLLY

NO man will be found in whose mind airy notions do not sometimes tyrannise, and force him to hope, or fear, beyond the limits of sober probability.

Rasselas.

FOPPERY

FOPPERY is never cured ; it is the bad stamina of the mind, which, like those of the body, are never rectified ; once a coxcomb and always a coxcomb.

Boswell's Johnson.

FORGIVENESS

WHOEVER considers the weakness both of himself and others, will not long want persuasives to forgiveness. We know not to what degree of malignity any injury is to be imputed, or how much its guilt, if we were to inspect the mind of him that committed it, would be extenuated by mistake, precipitance, or negligence. We cannot be certain how much more we feel than was intended, or how much we increase the mischief to ourselves by voluntary aggravations.

Rambler.

FORTUNE

FORTUNE often delights to dignify what nature has neglected, and that renown, which cannot be claimed by intrinsic excellence, or greatness, is sometimes derived from unexpected accidents.

Falkland Islands.

WHEN fortune strikes her hardest blows, to be wounded and yet continue calm, requires a generous policy. Perhaps the first emotions of nature are nearly uniform, and one man differs from another in the power of endurance, as he is better regulated by precept and instruction.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

FRIENDSHIP

FRIENDSHIP is not always the sequel of obligation.

Life of Thomson.

UNEQUAL friendships are easily dissolved. This is often the fault of the superior; yet if we look without prejudice on the world, we shall often find that men whose consciousness of their own merit sets them above the compliances of servility, are apt enough, in their association with superiors, to watch their own dignity, with troublesome and punctilious jealousy, and in the fervour of independence, to exact that attention which they refuse to pay.

Life of Gray.

SO many qualities are necessary to the possibility of friendship, and so many accidents must concur to its rise and its continuance, that the greatest part of mankind content themselves without it, and supply its place as they can with interest and dependence.

Rambler.

THAT friendship may be at once fond and lasting, there must not only be equal virtue on each part, but virtue of the same kind; not only the same end must be proposed, but the same means must be approved by both.

Rambler.

ONE of the Golden Precepts of *Pythagoras* directs us — ‘That a friend should not be hated for little faults.’

Rambler.

FRIENDSHIP, like love, is destroyed by long absence, though it may be increased by short intermissions. What we have missed long enough to want it, we value more when it is regained; but that which has been lost till it is forgotten, will be found at last with little gladness, and with still less if a substitute has supplied the place.

Idler.

AMONG the many enemies of friendship may be reckoned *suspicion* and *disgust*. The former is always hardening the cautious, and the latter repelling the delicate.
Idler.

IF a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, sir, should keep his friendship in constant repair.

GAMING

GAMING is a mode of transferring property without producing any intermediate good. Trade gives employment to numbers, and so produces intermediate good.

GENIUS

THOSE who are willing to attribute everything to genius, or natural sagacity, independent of a previous education, are encouraged to this opinion by laziness or pride, being willing to forego the labour of accurate reading and tedious enquiry, and to satisfy themselves with illustrious examples.

Life of Dr. Sydenham.

TRUE genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction.

Life of Cowley.

GENIUS is powerful when invested with the glitter of affluence. Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleased when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity and practising their duty.

Life of Savage.

WHOEVER is apt to hope good from others, is diligent to please them; but he that believes his powers strong enough to force their own way, commonly tries only to please himself.

Life of Gay.

GENIUS now and then produces a lucky trifle. We still read the *Dove* of Anacreon, and *Sparrow* of Catullus; and a writer naturally pleases himself with a performance which owes nothing to the subject.

Life of Waller.

GHOSTS

SIR, I make a distinction between what a man may experience by the mere strength of his imagination and what imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think that I saw a form and heard a voice say, 'Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow, and unless you repent you will certainly be punished'; my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed upon

my mind, that I might *imagine* I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear, and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular place, and a particular hour,—a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing,—and this fact, with all its circumstances, should afterwards be unquestionably proved, I should in that case be persuaded that I had supernatural intelligence imparted to me. (See also APPARITIONS.)

Boswell's Johnson.

GLUTTONY

GLUTTONY is, I think, less common among women than among men. Women commonly eat more sparingly, and are less curious in the choice of meat; but if once you find a woman gluttonous, expect from her very little virtue. Her mind is enslaved to the lowest and grossest temptation.

Piozzi Letters.

GOOD-HUMOUR

GOOD-HUMOUR may be defined; a habit of being pleased; a constant and perennial softness of manner, easiness of approach, and suavity of disposition, like that which every one perceives in himself,

when the first transports of new felicity have subsided, and his thoughts are only kept in motion by a slow succession of soft impulses.

Rambler.

GOOD-HUMOUR is a state between gaiety and unconcern; the act of a mind, at leisure, to regard the gratifications of another.

Rambler.

GOOD-HUMOUR AND GAIETY

GAIETY is to good-humour as animal perfumes to vegetable fragrance. The one overpowers weak spirits, the other recreates and revives them. Gaiety seldom fails to give some pain; the hearers either strain their faculties to accompany its towerings, or are left behind in envy or despair. Good-humour boasts no faculties, which every one does not believe in his own power, and pleases principally by not offending.

Rambler.

GOOD SHOULD BE UNIVERSAL

ALL skill ought to be exerted for universal good. Every man has owed much to others, and ought to pay the kindness that he has received.

Rasselas.

GOVERNMENT

TO prevent evil is the great end of government, the end for which vigilance and severity are properly employed.

Rambler.

NO government could subsist for a day, if single errors could justify defection.

Taxation no Tyranny.

GOVERNMENT is necessary to man; and when obedience is not compelled, there is no government.

Taxation no Tyranny.

GOVERNMENT, SELF-

NO man, whose appetites are his masters, can perform the duties of his nature with strictness and regularity. He that would be superior to external influences, must first become superior to his own passions.

Idler.

GREATNESS

HE that becomes acquainted and is invested with authority and influence, will in a short time be convinced that, in proportion as the power of doing well is enlarged, the temptations to do ill are multiplied and enforced.

Rambler.

GRIEF

WHILE grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only irritates. You must wait till grief be *digested*, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it.

GUILT

GUILT is generally afraid of light; it considers darkness as a natural shelter, and makes night the confidante of those actions, which cannot be trusted to the tell-tale day.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

HABITS

NO man forgets his original trade; the rights of nations and of kings sink into questions of grammar, if grammarians discuss them.

Life of Milton.

HAPPINESS

IT seldom happens that all circumstances concur to happiness or fame.

Rambler.

HAPPINESS is not found in self-contemplation; it is perceived only when it is reflected from another.

Idler.

WHATEVER be the cause of happiness may be made likewise the cause of misery. The medicine which, rightly applied, has power to cure, has, when rashness or ignorance prescribes it, the same power to destroy.

Dissertation on Authors.

THE happiness of the generality of people is nothing if it is not known, and very little if it is not envied.

Idler.

THAT man is never happy for the present is so true that all his relief from unhappiness is only forgetting himself for a little while. Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment.

Boswell's Johnson

THAT all who are happy are equally happy is not true. A peasant and a philosopher may be equally *satisfied*, but not equally *happy*. Happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable consciousness. A peasant has not capacity for having equal happiness with a philosopher.

HELPLESSNESS

LET a man give application, and depend upon it, he will soon get above a despicable state of helplessness, and attain the power of acting for himself.

HISTORIANS

GREAT abilities are not requisite for an historian ; for in historical composition all the greatest powers of the human mind are quiescent. He has facts ready to his hand ; so there is no exercise of invention. Imagination is not required in any high degree ; only about as much as is used in the lower kinds of poetry. Some penetration, accuracy, and colouring will fit a man for the task, if he can give the application which is necessary.

HOPE

WITHOUT hope there can be no caution.

Rambler.

IT is seldom that we find either men, or places, such as we expect them. He that has pictured a prospect upon his fancy will receive little pleasure from his eyes : he that has anticipated the conversation of a wit will wonder to what prejudice he owes his reputation. Yet it is necessary to *hope*, though hope should always be deluded : for hope itself is happiness ; and its frustrations, however frequent, are yet less dreadful than its extinction.

Idler.

WHATEVER enlarges hope, will likewise exalt courage.

Western Islands.

IDLENESS

AS pride is sometimes hid under humility, idleness is often covered by turbulence and hurry. He that neglects his own duty, and real employment, naturally endeavours to crowd his mind with something that may bar out the remembrance of his own folly, and does anything but what he ought to do, with eager diligence, that he may keep himself in his own favour.

Idler.

NO man is so much open to conviction as the *idler*; but there is none on whom it operates so little.

Idler.

THE drunkard, for a time, laughs over his wine—the ambitious man triumphs in the miscarriage of his rival; but the *captives of indolence* have neither *superiority* nor *merriment*.

Vision of Theodore.

IDLENESS predominates in many lives where it is not suspected; for, being a vice which terminates in itself, it may be enjoyed without injury to others, and is therefore not watched like fraud, which

endangers property, or like pride, which naturally seeks its gratifications in another's inferiority. Idleness is a silent and peaceful quality, that neither raises envy by ostentation, nor hatred by opposition; and therefore nobody is busy to censure or detect it.

Rambler.

IGNORANCE

GROSS ignorance every man has found equally dangerous with perverted knowledge. Men left wholly to their appetites and their instincts, with little sense of moral or religious obligation, and with very faint distinctions of right and wrong, can never be safely employed, or confidently trusted. They can be honest only by obstinacy, and diligent only by compulsion or caprice. Some instruction, therefore, is necessary; and much, perhaps, may be dangerous.

Review of the Origin of Evil.

IGNORANCE AND CONFIDENCE

IN things difficult there is danger from ignorance; in things easy, from confidence.

Preface to Dictionary.

IGNORANCE AND KNOWLEDGE

THE expectation of ignorance is indefinite and that of knowledge often tyrannical. It is hard to satisfy those who

know not what to demand, or those who demand, by design, what they think impossible to be done.

Preface to Shakespeare.

IMAGINATION

IT is the great failing of a strong imagination to catch greedily at wonders.

Memoirs of the King of Prussia.

A MAN who once resolves upon ideal discoveries, seldom searches long in vain.

Life of Sir Thomas Browne.

IMITATION

THE Macedonian conqueror, when he was once invited to hear a man that sung like a nightingale, replied with contempt, 'That he had heard the nightingale herself': and the same treatment must every man expect, whose praise is that he imitates another.

Rambler.

ALMOST all the absurdity of conduct arises from the imitation of those whom we cannot resemble.

Rambler.

WE are easily flattered by an imitator, when we do not fear ever to be rivalled.

Rambler.

IMITATIONS produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to the mind. When the imagination is recreated by a landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade; but we consider how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us.

Preface to Shakespeare.

NO man was ever great by imitation.

Rasselas.

IT is justly considered as the greatest excellency of art to imitate nature; but it requires judgment to distinguish those parts of nature which are most proper for imitation.

Rambler.

IMPOSITION

THERE are those who having got the *cant of the day*, with a *superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation*, very often impose themselves as men of understanding, upon wise men.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

INCIVILITY

SIR, a man has no more right to *say* an uncivil thing than to *act* one; no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down.

Boswell's Johnson.

INCONSTANCY

I NCONSTANCY is in every case a mark of weakness.

Plan of an English Dictionary.

INDUSTRY

I T is below the dignity of a reasonable being to owe that strength to necessity which ought always to act at the call of choice, or to need any other motive to industry than the desire of performing his duty.

Rambler.

INNOCENCE

THERE are some reasoners who frequently confound *innocence* with the *mere incapacity of guilt*; but he that never saw, or heard, or thought of, strong liquors, cannot be proposed as a pattern of sobriety.

Life of Drake.

INSULT

WHATEVER be the motive of insult, it is always best to overlook it; for folly scarcely can deserve resentment, and malice is punished by neglect.

Rambler.

INTELLECTUAL LABOUR

MANKIND have a great aversion to intellectual labour. But even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would like even a little trouble to acquire it.

IRISH AND SCOTCH

THE Irish mix better with the English than the Scotch do. Their language is nearer to English; as a proof of which they succeed very well as players, which Scotchmen do not. Then, sir, they have not that extreme nationality which we find in the Scotch. I will do you, Boswell, the justice to say that you are the most *unscotchified* of your countrymen. You are almost the only instance of a Scotchman that I have known who did not at every other sentence bring in some other Scotchman.

Boswell's Johnson.

IRRESOLUTION

HE that knows not whither to go, is in no haste to move.

Life of Swift.

JOY

AS briars have sweetness with their prickles, so are troubles often recompensed with joy.

Rambler.

JUDGMENT

JUDGMENT is forced upon us by *experience*. He that reads many books, must compare one opinion, or one style, with another; and, when he compares, must necessarily distinguish, reject, and prefer.

Life of Pope.

THOSE who have no power to judge of past times, but by their own, should always doubt their conclusions.

Life of Milton.

JUSTICE

ONE of the principal parts of national felicity arises from a wise and impartial administration of justice. Every man reposes upon the tribunals of his country,

the stability of profession and the serenity of life. He therefore who unjustly exposes the courts of judicature to suspicion, either of partiality, or error, not only does an injury to those who dispense the laws, but diminishes the public confidence in the laws themselves and shakes the foundation of public tranquillity.

Convict's Address.

KNOWLEDGE

MAN is not weak ; knowledge is more than equivalent to force.

Rasselas.

OTHER things may be seized by might, or purchased with money ; but knowledge is to be gained only by study, and study to be prosecuted only in retirement.

Rambler.

THE seeds of knowledge may be planted in solitude, but must be cultivated in public.

Rambler.

LANGUAGE

[LANGUAGE] must have come by inspiration. A thousand, nay a million of children could not invent a language. While the organs are pliable there is not understanding enough to form a language ; by the time that there is understanding

enough the organs are become stiff. We know that after a certain age we cannot learn to pronounce a new language. No foreigner who comes to England when advanced in life ever pronounces English tolerably well; at least, such instances are very rare. When I maintain that language must have come by inspiration, I do not mean that inspiration is required for rhetoric and all the beauties of language; for when once man has language we may conceive that he may gradually form modifications of it. I mean only that inspiration seems to me to be necessary to give man the faculty of speech; to inform him that he may have speech; which I think he could no more find out without inspiration than cows or hogs would think of such a faculty.

Boswell's Johnson.

LANGUAGE is the dress of thought; and as the noblest mien, or most graceful action, would be degraded and obscured by a garb appropriated to the gross employments of rustics, or mechanics, so the most heroic sentiments will lose their efficacy, and the most splendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, debased by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by inelegant applications.

Life of Cowley.

THE affluence and comprehension of our language is very illustriously displayed in our poetical *translations of ancient writers*; a work which the French seem to relinquish in despair, and which we were long unable to perform with dexterity.

Life of Dryden.

LANGUAGE is only the instrument of science, and words are but the signs of ideas.

Preface to Dictionary.

LANGUAGE, ENGLISH

THERE is not, perhaps, one of the liberal arts which may not be completely learned in the English language.

Preface to Dictionary.

IT is incident to words, as to their authors, to degenerate from their ancestors, and to change their manners when they change their country.

LAW, THE

THE law is the last result of human wisdom acting on human experience for the good of the public.

LAWYERS

A LAWYER has no business with the justice or injustice of the cause which he undertakes, unless his client asks his opinion, and then he is bound to give it honestly. The justice or injustice of the cause is to be decided by the judge. Consider, sir, what is the purpose of courts of justice. It is that every man may have his cause fairly tried by men appointed to try causes. A lawyer is not to tell what he knows to be a lie; he is not to produce what he knows to be a false deed; but he is not to usurp the province of the jury and the judge, and determine what shall be the effect of evidence, what shall be the result of legal argument. As it rarely happens that a man is fit to plead his own cause, lawyers are a class of the community who, by study and experience, have acquired the art and power of arranging evidence, and of applying to the points at issue what the law has settled. A lawyer is to do for his client all that his client might fairly do for himself if he could. If, by a superiority of attention or knowledge, of skill, and a better method of communication, he has the advantage of his adversary, it is an advantage to which he is entitled. There must always be some advantage, on one side or other, and it is better that advantage should be had by

talents than chance. If lawyers were to undertake no causes till they were sure they were just, a man might be precluded altogether from a trial of his claim, though were it judiciously examined, it might be found a very just claim.

Western Islands.

LEARNING

IT is not by comparing *line* with *line*, that the merit of great works is to be estimated; but by their general effects and ultimate result.

Life of Dryden.

WHEN learning was first rising on the world, in the fifteenth century, ages so long accustomed to darkness were too much dazzled with its light to see anything distinctly. The first race of scholars, hence, for the most part, were learning to speak rather than to think, and were therefore more studious of elegance than truth. The contemporaries of Boethius thought it sufficient to know what the ancients had delivered; the examination of tenets and facts was reserved for another generation.

UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS LIBRARY
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Western Islands.

LIBERTY

A ZEAL, which is often thought, and called liberty, sometimes disguises from the world, and not rarely from the mind which it possesses, an envious desire of plundering wealth, or degrading greatness; and of which the immediate tendency is innovation and anarchy, or imperious eagerness to subvert and confound, with very little care what shall be established.

Life of Akenside.

IT has been observed, that they who most loudly clamour for *liberty*, do not most liberally grant it.

Life of Milton.

LIFE

THE main of life is composed of small incidents and petty occurrences, of wishes for objects not remote, and grief for disappointments of no fatal consequence; of insect vexations, which sting us and fly away; and impertinences which buzz a while about us, and are heard no more. Thus a few pains, and a few pleasures, are all the materials of human life; and of these the proportions are partly allotted by Providence, and partly left to the arrangement of reason and choice.

Rambler.

LIFE may be lengthened by care, though death cannot ultimately be defeated.

Preface to Dictionary.

THE great art of life is to play for much, and stake little.

Dissertation on Authors.

LIFE is not to be counted by the ignorance of infancy, or the imbecility of age. We are long before we are able to think, and we soon cease from the power of acting.

Rasselas.

HUMAN life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed.

Rasselas.

LIFE, however short, is made still shorter by waste of time; and its progress towards happiness, though naturally slow, is yet retarded by unnecessary labour.

Rasselas.

LITERATURE

LITERATURE is a kind of intellectual light, which, like the light of the sun, may sometimes enable us to see what we do not like; but who would wish to escape unpleasing objects, by condemning himself to perpetual darkness?

Dissertation on Authors.

LIVING OVER AGAIN

EVERY man would lead his life over again; for every man is willing to go on, and take an addition to his life, which, as he grows older, he has no reason to think will be better, or even so good as what has preceded.

Boswell's Johnson.

LOYALTY

AS a man inebriated only by vapours soon recovers in the open air, a nation discontented to madness, without any adequate cause, will return to its wits and allegiance, when a little pause has cooled it to reflection.

False Alarm.

MALICE

WE should not despise the malice of the weakest. We should remember that venom supplies the want of strength; and that the lion may perish by the puncture of an asp.

Rambler.

THE natural discontent of inferiority will seldom fail to operate, in some degree of malice, against him who professes to superintend the conduct of others, especi-

ally if he seats himself uncalled in the chair of judicature, and exercises authority by his own commission.

Idler.

MAN

THERE is an inequality happens to every *man*, in every mode of exertion, manual or mental. The mechanic cannot handle his hammer and his file, at all times, with equal dexterity; there are hours, he knows not why, *when his hand is out*.

Life of Milton.

MAN is seldom willing to let fall the opinion of his own dignity. He is better content to want diligence than power, and sooner confesses the depravity of his will, than the imbecility of his nature.

Idler.

MANNERS

THE manners of a people are not to be found in the schools of learning, or the palaces of greatness, where the national character is obscured, or obliterated by travel, or instruction, by philosophy, or vanity; nor is public happiness to be estimated by the assemblies of the gay, or the banquets of the rich. The great mass of nations is neither rich nor gay. They whose

aggregate constitutes the people, are found in the streets and the villages ; in the shops and farms ; and from them, collectively considered, must the measure of general prosperity be taken. As they approach to delicacy, a nation is refined ; as their conveniences are multiplied, a nation, at least a commercial nation, must be denominated wealthy.

Western Islands.

MARRIAGE

IT is not likely that the marriage state is eminently miserable ; since we see such numbers, whom the death of their partners has set free from it, entering it again.

Rambler.

MOST people marry upon mingled motives between *convenience* and *inclination*.

Life of Sir Thomas Browne.

MARRIAGE is the best state for man in general ; and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the married state.

MEMORY

THE true art of memory is the art of attention. No man will read with much advantage, who is not able, at pleasure,

to evacuate his mind, and who brings not to his author an intellect defecated and pure ; neither turbid with care, nor agitated with pleasure. If the repositories of thought are already full, what can they receive ? If the mind is employed on the past, or future, the book will be held before the eyes in vain.

Idler.

MERIT ALWAYS RECOGNISED

I NEVER knew a man of merit neglected ; it was generally by his own fault that he failed of success.

Boswell's Johnson.

METHOD

AS the end of method is perspicuity, that series is sufficiently regular that avoids obscurity ; and where there is no obscurity, it will not be difficult to discover method.

Life of Pope.

MIND

AN envious and unsocial mind, too proud to give pleasure, and too sullen to receive it, always endeavours to hide its malignity from the world and from itself—under the plainness of simple honesty, or the dignity of haughty independence.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

EVERY man is obliged, by the Supreme Master of the universe, to improve all the opportunities of good which are afforded him, and to keep in continual activity such abilities as are bestowed upon him. But he has no reason to repine, though his abilities are small, and his opportunities few. He that has improved the virtue, or advanced the happiness of one fellow-creature—he that has ascertained a single moral proposition, or added one useful experiment to natural knowledge—may be contented with his own performance; and, with respect to mortals like himself, may demand, like Augustus, to be dismissed, at his departure, with applause.

Idler.

MIRTH

MERRIMENT is always the effect of a sudden impression; the jest which is expected is already destroyed.

Idler.

ANY passion, too strongly agitated, puts an end to that tranquillity which is necessary to mirth. Whatever we ardently wish to gain, we must, in the same degree, be afraid to lose; and fear and pleasure cannot dwell together.

Rambler.

REAL mirth must be always natural; and nature is uniform. Men have been wise in different modes, but they have always laughed the same way.

Life of Cowley.

THE perverseness of mankind makes it often mischievous in men of eminence to give way to *merriment*: The idle and the illiterate will often shelter themselves under what they say in those moments.

Life of Blackmore.

MISFORTUNES

DEPEND upon it, that if a man *talks* of his misfortunes there is something in them that is not disagreeable to him; for where there is nothing but pure misery, there never is any recourse to the mention of it.

Boswell's Johnson.

MONEY

TO mend the world by banishing money is an old contrivance of those who did not consider that the quarrels and mischiefs which arise from money as the sign, or ticket of riches, must, if money were to cease, arise immediately from riches themselves, and could never be at an end until every man was contented with his own share of the goods of life.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

NOVELTY

EVERY novelty appears more wonderful, as it is more remote from anything with which experience or testimony have hitherto acquainted us; and if it passes further beyond the notions that we have been accustomed to form, it becomes at last incredible.

Idler.

TO oblige the most fertile genius to say only what is *new*, would be to contract his volumes to a few pages.

Idler.

NUMBERS

TO count, is a modern practice: the ancient method was, to guess; and when numbers are guessed, they are always magnified.

Western Islands.

OBLIGATION

TO be obliged is to be in some respect inferior to another, and few willingly indulge the memory of an action which raises one whom they have always been accustomed to think below them, but satisfy themselves with faint praise, and penurious payment, and then drive it from their own minds, and endeavour to conceal it from the knowledge of others.

Rambler.

OPINION

THE opinion prevalent in one age, as truths above the reach of controversy, are confuted and rejected in another, and rise again to reception in remoter times. Thus, the human mind is kept in motion without progress. Thus, sometimes, truth and error, and sometimes contrarieties of error, take each other's place by reciprocal invasion.

Preface to Shakespeare.

MUCH of the pain and pleasure of mankind arises from the conjectures which every one makes of the thoughts of others. We all enjoy praise which we do not hear, and resent contempt which we do not see.

Idler.

OPPORTUNITY

TO improve the golden moment of opportunity, and catch the good that is within our reach, is the great art of life.

PAIN

PAIN is less subject than pleasure to caprices of expression.

Idler.

PATRIOT

A PATRIOT is he whose public conduct is regulated by one single motive, viz. *the love of his country*; who, as an agent, in parliament, has for himself, neither hope, nor fear; neither kindness nor resentment; but refers everything to the common interest.

The Patriot.

PEEVISHNESS

SUCH is the consequence of peevishness, it can be borne only when it is despised.

Rambler.

HE that resigns his peace to little casualties, and suffers the course of his life to be interrupted by fortuitous inadvertencies, or offences, delivers up himself to the direction of the wind, and loses all that constancy, and equanimity, which constitute the chief praise of a wise man.

Rambler.

PEEVISHNESS is generally the vice of narrow minds, and except when it is the effect of anguish and disease, by which the resolution is broken, and the mind made too feeble to bear the lightest addition to its miseries, proceeds from an unreasonable

persuasion of the importance of trifles. The proper remedy against it is, to consider the dignity of human nature, and the folly of suffering perturbation and uneasiness, from causes unworthy of our notice.

PEOPLE

NO people can be great who have ceased to be virtuous.

Political State of Great Britain.

THE prosperity of a people is proportionate to the number of hands and minds usefully employed. To the community, sedition is a fever, corruption is a gangrene, and idleness an atrophy. Whatever body, and whatever society wastes more than it requires, must gradually decay; and every being that continues to be fed, and ceases to labour, takes away something from the public stock.

Idler.

PERFECTION

TO pursue perfection in any science, where perfection is unattainable, is like the first inhabitants of Arcadia to chase the sun, which, when they had reached the hill, where he seemed to rest, was still beheld at the same distance from them.

Life of Waller.

IT seldom happens that all the necessary causes concur to any great effect. Will is wanting to power, or power to will, or both are impeded by external obstructions.

Life of Dryden.

PERFIDY

COMBINATIONS of wickedness would overwhelm the world, by the advantage which licentious principles afford, did not those who have long practised perfidy grow faithless to each other.

Life of Waller.

PITY

PITY is not natural to man. Children are always cruel. Savages are always cruel. Pity is acquired and improved by the cultivation of reason. We may have uneasy sensations from seeing a creature in distress, without pity; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them. When I am on my way to dine with a friend, and, finding it late, bid the coachman make haste, if I happen to attend when he whips his horses, I may feel unpleasantly that the animals are put to pain, but I do not wish him to desist; no, sir, I wish him to drive on.

PITY is to many of the unhappy a source of comfort in hopeless distresses, as it contributes to recommend them to themselves, by proving that they have not lost the regard of others; and heaven seems to indicate the duty even of barren compassion, by inclining us to weep for evils which we cannot remedy.

Rambler.

PLEASURE

WHATEVER professes to benefit by pleasing, must please at once. What is perceived by slow degrees, may gratify us with the consciousness of improvement, but will never strike us with the sense of pleasure.

Life of Cowley.

THE merit of pleasing must be estimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions, or laudable qualities. Caresses and preferments are often bestowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the procurers of pleasure, or the flatterers of vanity.

Life of Dryden.

PLEASURE is only received when we believe that we give it in return.

Rambler.

PLEASURE is seldom such as it appears to others, nor often such as we represent it to ourselves.

Idler.

MEN may be convinced, but they cannot be *pleased* against their will. But though taste is obstinate, it is very variable, and time often prevails, when arguments have failed.

Life of Congreve.

POETS AND POETRY

IN almost all countries, the most ancient poets are considered as the best. Whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is an acquisition gradually attained, and poetry is a gift conferred at once; or that the first poetry of every nation surprised them as a novelty, and retained the credit by consent, which it received by accident at first; or whether, as the province of poetry is to describe nature and passion, which are always the same, the first writers took possession of the most striking objects for description, and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to those that followed them, but transcription of the same events, and new combinations of the same images. Whatever be the reason, it is commonly observed, that the early writers are in possession of *nature*, and their followers of *art*.

Rasselas.

COMPOSITIONS, merely pretty, have the fate of other pretty things, and are quitted in time for something useful. They are flowers fragrant and fair, but of short duration; or they are blossoms only to be valued as they foretell fruits.

Life of Waller.

THOSE who admire the beauties of a great poet, sometimes force their own judgment into a false approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance.

Life of Milton.

POLITENESS

POLITENESS is one of those advantages which we never estimate rightly, but by the inconvenience of its loss. Its influence upon the manners is constant and uniform, so that, like an equal motion, it escapes perception. The circumstances of every action are so adjusted to each other, that we do not see where any error could have been committed, and rather acquiesce in its propriety, than admire its exactness.

Rambler.

THE true effect of genuine politeness seems to be rather *ease*, than *pleasure*. The power of delighting must be conferred by nature, and cannot be delivered by precept, or obtained by imitation ; but though it be the privilege of a very small number to ravish and to charm, every man may hope, by rules and caution, not to give pain, and may, therefore, by the help of good-breeding, enjoy the kindness of mankind, though he should have no claim to higher distinctions.

Rambler.

POLITENESS is fictitious benevolence. It supplies the place of it among those who see each other only in public, or but little. Depend upon it, the want of it never fails to produce something disagreeable to one or other. I have always applied to good-breeding what Addison in his *Cato* says of honour :—

‘ Honour’s a sacred tie : the law of kings ;
 The noble mind’s distinguishing perfection ;
 That aids and strengthens virtue where it meets
 her,
 And imitates her actions where she is not.’

WHEN the pale of ceremony is once broken, rudeness and insult soon enter the breach.

Rambler.

POLITICS

POLITICAL truth is equally in danger from the praises of courtiers, and the exclamation of patriots.

Life of Waller.

POVERTY

THE poor are insensible of many little vexations which sometimes imbitter the possessions, and pollute the enjoyments of the rich. They are not pained by casual incivility, or mortified by the mutilation of a compliment: but this happiness is like that of a malefactor, who ceases to feel the cords that bind him when the pincers are tearing his flesh.

Review of the Origin of Evil.

SOME men are poor by their own faults: some by the fault of others.

Life of Roger Ascham.

MANY men are made the poorer by opulence.

Life of Sir Thomas Browne.

POVERTY has, in large cities, very different appearances. It is often concealed in splendour, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from

the rest. They support themselves by temporary expedients, and every day is lost in contriving for to-morrow.

Rasselas.

POVERTY AND IDLENESS

TO be idle and to be poor have always been reproaches, and therefore every man endeavours, with his utmost care, to hide his poverty from others, and his idleness from himself.

Idler.

PRAISE

PRAISE is so pleasing to the mind of man that it is the original motive of almost all our actions.

Rambler.

PRAISE, like gold and diamonds, owes its value only to its scarcity. It becomes cheap as it becomes vulgar, and will no longer raise expectation, or animate enterprise. It is, therefore, not only necessary that wickedness, even when it is not safe to censure it, be denied applause, but that goodness be commended only in proportion to its degree; and that the garlands due to the great benefactors of mankind, be not suffered to fade upon the brow of him, who can boast only petty services and easy virtues.

Rambler.

PRECIPITANCY

HE that too early aspires to honours must resolve to encounter, not only the opposition of interest, but the malignity of envy. He that is too eager to be rich, generally endangers his fortune in wild adventures and uncertain projects; and he that hastens too speedily to reputation, often raises his character by artifices and fallacies, decks himself in colours which quickly fade, or in plumes which accident may shake off, or competition pluck away.

Rambler.

PREJUDICE

TO be prejudiced is always to be weak, yet there are prejudices so near to being laudable, that they have been often praised, and are always pardoned.

Taxation no Tyranny.

PRIDE

SMALL things make mean men proud.

Preface to Shakespeare.

PRIDE is a vice, which pride itself inclines every man to find in others, and to overlook in himself.

Life of Sir Thomas Browne.

PRIDE AND ENVY

PRIDE is seldom delicate, it will please itself with very mean advantages ; and envy feels not its own happiness, but when it may be compared with the misery of others.

Rasselas.

PROPRIETY

THE polite are always catching at modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hopes of finding or making better. But propriety resides in that kind of conversation which is above grossness and below refinement.

Preface to Shakespeare.

PROSPERITY

PROSPERITY, as is truly asserted by Seneca, very much obstructs the knowledge of ourselves. No man can form a just estimate of his own powers, by inactive speculation. That fortitude which has encountered no dangers, that prudence which has surmounted no difficulties, that integrity which has been attacked by no temptations, can at best be considered but as gold, not yet brought to the test, of which therefore the true value cannot be assigned. Equally necessary is some variety of fortune to a nearer inspection of the manners, principles and affections of mankind.

Rambler.

PROVIDENCE

IF the extent of the human view could comprehend the whole frame of the universe, perhaps it would be found invariably true, that Providence has given that in greatest plenty, which the condition of life makes of greatest use ; and that nothing is penuriously imparted, or placed far from the reach of men, of which a more liberal distribution, or more easy acquisition, would increase real and rational felicity.

PRUDENCE

PRUDENCE operates on life in the same manner as rules on composition ; it produces vigilance rather than elevation, rather prevents loss than procures advantage, and often escapes miscarriages, but seldom reaches either power or honour.

Idler.

PRUDENCE AND JUSTICE

ARISTOTLE is praised for naming fortitude, first of the cardinal virtues, as that without which no other virtue can steadily be practised ; but he might, with equal propriety, have placed *prudence* and *justice* before it ; since without prudence fortitude is mad, without justice it is mischievous.

Life of Pope.

RAILLERY

HE who is in the exercise of Raillery should prepare himself to receive it in turn. When Lewis the xiv. was asked why with so much wit he never attempted Raillery, he answered, that he who practised Raillery ought to bear it in his turn, and that to stand the butt of Raillery was not suitable to the dignity of a king.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

READING

IT is strange that there should be so little reading in the world, and so much writing. People in general do not willingly read if they can have anything else to amuse them. There must be an external impulse, emulation, or vanity, or avarice. The progress which the understanding makes through a book has more pain than pleasure in it. Language is scanty and inadequate to express the nice gradations and mixtures of our feelings. No man reads a book of science from pure inclination. The books that we do read with pleasure are light compositions, which contain a quick succession of events.

IDLENESS is a disease which must be combated; but I would not advise a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study.

I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in the day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge.

REASON AND FANCY

REASON is like the sun, of which the light is constant, uniform and lasting. Fancy, a meteor of bright but transitory lustre, irregular in its motion, and delusive in its direction.

Rasselas.

REBELLION

TO bring misery on those who have not deserved it, is part of the aggregated guilt of rebellion.

Taxation no Tyranny.

NOTHING can be more noxious to society than that erroneous clemency, which, when a rebellion is suppressed, exacts no forfeiture, and establishes no securities, but leaves the rebels in their former state.

Taxation no Tyranny.

RELIGION

TO be of no church, is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant, and which is animated only by faith and hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unless it be invigorated, and re-impressed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example.

Life of Milton.

THE great task of him who conducts his life by the precepts of *religion*, is to make the future predominate over the present, to impress upon his mind so strong a sense of the importance of obedience to the divine will, of the value of the reward promised to virtue, and the terrors of the punishment denounced against crimes, as may overbear all the temptations which temporal hope, or fear, can bring in his way, and enable him to bid equal defiance to joy and sorrow, to turn away at one time from the allurements of ambition, and push forward at another against the threats of calamity.

Rambler.

PHILOSOPHY may infuse stubbornness, but Religion only can give patience.

Idler.

MALEVOLENCE to the clergy is seldom at a great distance from irreverence to Religion.

Life of Dryden.

REPROOF

REPROOF should not exhaust its power upon petty failings; let it watch diligently against the incursion of vice, and leave foppery and futility to die of themselves.

Idler.

RESOLUTION

WHEN desperate ills demand a speedy cure, distrust is cowardice and prudence folly.

Irene.

RESOLUTION and success reciprocally produce each other.

Life of Drake.

MOST men may review all the lives that have passed within their observation, without remembering one efficacious resolution, or being able to tell a single instance of a course of practice suddenly changed, in consequence of a change of opinion, or an establishment of determination. Many, indeed, alter their conduct, and are not at fifty what they were at thirty; but they commonly varied imperceptibly from themselves, followed the train

of external causes, and rather suffered reformation than made it.

Idler.

RESPECT

RESPECT is often paid in proportion as it is claimed.

Idler.

RETALIATION

IT is too common for those who have unjustly suffered pain, to inflict it likewise in their turn with the same injustice, and to imagine they have a right to treat others as they themselves have been treated.

Life of Savage.

RETIREMENT

SOME suspension of common affairs, some pause of temporal pain and pleasure, is doubtless necessary to him that deliberates for eternity, who is forming the only plan in which miscarriage cannot be repaired, and examining the only question in which mistake cannot be rectified.

Rambler.

RETROSPECTION

THERE are few higher gratifications than that of reflection on surmounted evils, when they were not incurred nor protracted by our fault, and neither reproach us with cowardice nor guilt.

Rambler.

ALL useless misery is certainly folly, and he that feels evils before they come, may be deservedly censured; yet surely to dread the future, is more reasonable than to lament the past. The business of life is to go forward; he who sees evils in prospect, meets it in his way; but he who catches it by retrospection, turns back to find it.

Idler.

THERE is certainly no greater happiness than to be able to look back on a life usefully and virtuously employed; to trace our own progress in existence, by such tokens as excite neither shame nor sorrow. It ought therefore to be the care of those who wish to pass the last hours with comfort, to lay up such a treasure of pleasing ideas, as shall support the expenses of that time, which is to depend wholly upon the fund already acquired.

Rambler.

MARSHAL TURENNE, among the acknowledgments which he used to pay in conversation to the memory of those by whom he had been instructed in the art of war, mentioned one, with honour, who taught him *not to spend his time in regretting any mistake which he had made, but to*

set himself immediately and vigorously to repair it.—Patience and submission should be carefully distinguished from cowardice and indolence ; we are not to repine, but we may lawfully struggle ; for the calamities of life, like the necessities of nature, are calls to labour, and exercises of diligence.

Rambler.

REVENGE

FORBEARANCE of revenge, when revenge is within reach, is scarcely ever to be found among princes.

Memoirs of the King of Prussia.

RHYME

RHYME, says Milton, and says truly, is *no necessary adjunct of true poetry.* But, perhaps, of poetry, as a mental operation, metre or music is no necessary adjunct ; it is, however, by the music of metre that poetry has been discriminated in all languages ; and in languages melodiously constructed, by a due proportion of long and short syllables, metre is sufficient. But one language cannot communicate its rules to another. Where metre is scanty and imperfect, some help is necessary. The music of the English heroic line strikes the ear so faintly, that it is easily lost, unless all the syllables of every line co-operate together.

This co-operation can be only obtained by the preservation of every verse, unmingled with another, as a distinct system of sounds ; and this distinctness is obtained, and preserved, by the *artifice of rhyme*.

Life of Milton.

TO attempt any further improvement of *versification*, beyond what Pope has given us in his translation of Homer's *Iliad*, will be dangerous. Art and diligence have now done their best ; and what shall be added, will be the effort of tedious toil, and needless curiosity.

Life of Pope.

RICHES

WEALTH is nothing in itself ; it is not useful but when it departs from us : its value is found only in that which it can purchase, which, if we suppose it put to its best use, seems not much to deserve the desire, or envy, of a wise man. It is certain that, with regard to corporal enjoyment, money can neither open new avenues to pleasure, nor block up the passages of anguish. Disease and infirmity still continue to torture and enfeeble, perhaps exasperated by luxury, or promoted by softness.

Rambler.

THOUGH riches often prompt extravagant hopes and fallacious appearances, there are purposes to which a wise man may be delighted to apply them. They may, by a rational distribution to those who want them, ease the pains of helpless disease, still the throbs of restless anxiety, relieve innocence from oppression, and raise imbecility to cheerfulness and vigour. This they will enable a man to perform; and this will afford the only happiness ordained for our present state, the consequence of divine favour, and the hope of future rewards.

Rambler.

IT is observed of gold by an old epigrammatist, 'that to have it, is to be in fear, and to want it, to be in sorrow.'

Rambler.

EVERY man is rich or poor, according to the proportion between his desires and enjoyments. Any enlargement of riches is therefore equally destructive to happiness with the diminution of possession; and he that teaches another to long for what he shall never obtain, is no less an enemy to his quiet, than if he had robbed him of part of his patrimony.

Rambler.

RICHES AND UNDERSTANDING

AS many more can discover that a man is richer than themselves, superiority of understanding is not so readily acknowledged as that of fortune; nor is that haughtiness, which the consciousness of great abilities incites, borne with the same submission as the tyranny of affluence.

Life of Savage.

SATIRE

PERSONAL resentment, though no laudable motive to satire, can add great force to general principles. Self-love is a busy prompter.

Life of Dryden.

ALL truth is valuable, and satirical criticism may be considered as useful, when it rectifies error, and improves judgment. He that refines the public taste is a public benefactor.

Life of Pope.

SECRECY

THE whole doctrine, as well as the practice of secrecy is so perplexing and dangerous, that next to him who is compelled to trust, that man is unhappy who is *chosen to be trusted*; for he is often involved in scruples, without the liberty of calling in the help of any other under-

standing ; he is frequently drawn into guilt, under the appearance of friendship and honesty ; and sometimes subjected to suspicion, by the treachery of others, who are engaged without his knowledge in the same schemes : for he that has *one* confidant, has generally *more* ; and when he is, at last, betrayed, is in doubt on whom he shall fix the crime.

Rambler.

THE rules that may be proposed concerning secrecy, and which it is not safe to deviate from, without long and exact deliberation, are,

First, *Never to solicit the knowledge of a secret*—nor *willingly*, nor *without many limitations*, accept such confidence, when it is offered.

Second, when a secret is once admitted, to consider the trust as of a very high nature, *important as society*—and *sacred as truth*—and therefore not to be violated for *any incidental convenience*, or *slight appearance of contrary fitness*.

Rambler.

SECRETS

SECRETS are so seldom kept, that it may be with some reason doubted, whether a secret has not some subtle volatility by which it escapes, imperceptibly, at the

smallest vent, or some power of fermentation, by which it expands itself, so as to burst the heart that will not give it way.

Rambler.

TO tell our own secrets is generally folly, but that folly is without guilt. To communicate those with which we are intrusted, is always treachery, and treachery for the most part combined with folly.

Rambler.

SEDUCTION

THERE is not perhaps, in all the stores of ideal anguish, a thought more painful, than the consciousness of having propagated corruption by vitiating principles; of having not only drawn others from the paths of virtue, but blocked up the way by which they should return; of having blinded them to every beauty, but the paint of pleasure; and deafened them to every call, but the alluring voice of the sirens of destruction.

Rambler.

SENSE, GOOD-

GOOD-SENSE is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy.

Life of Pope.

SHAME

SHAME, above any other passion, propagates itself.

Rambler.

IT is, perhaps, kindly provided by nature, that as the feathers and strength of a bird grow together, and her wings are not completed till she is able to fly; so some proportion should be observed in the human mind, between judgment and courage. The precipitation of experience is therefore restrained by *shame*, and we remain shackled by timidity, till we have learned to speak and act with propriety.

Rambler.

SHAME operates most strongly in our earliest years.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

SINGULARITY

SINGULARITY, as it implies a contempt of general practice, is a kind of defiance, which justly provokes the hostility of ridicule. He therefore who indulges peculiar habits, is worse than others, if he be not better.

Life of Swift.

SOLITUDE

IN solitude, if we escape the example of bad men, we likewise want the counsel and conversation of the good.

Rasselas.

THE life of a solitary man will be certainly miserable, but not certainly devout.

Rasselas.

STUDY

AS in life, so in study, it is dangerous to do more things than one at a time; and the mind is not to be harassed with unnecessary obstructions, in a way of which the natural and unavoidable asperity is such, as too frequently produces despair.

Preface to the Preceptor.

STYLE

FEW faults of style, whether real or imaginary, excite the malignity of a more numerous class of readers, than the use of hard words. But words are only hard to those who do not understand them; and the critic ought always to inquire, whether he is incommoded by the fault of the writer, or by his own.

Idler.

EVERY language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastic and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and gross; and, from a nice distinction of these different parts, arises a great part of the beauties of style.

Life of Dryden.

SUBLIMITY

SUBLIMITY is produced by *aggregation*, and *littleness* by *dispersion*. Great thoughts are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions, and in descriptions not descending to minuteness.

Life of Cowley.

SUBORDINATION

HE that encroaches on another's dignity, puts himself in his power; he is either repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension. A great mind disdains to hold anything by courtesy, and therefore never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away.

Life of Swift.

SUSPICION

SUSPICION is no less an enemy to virtue, than to happiness. He that is already corrupt, is naturally suspicious; and he that becomes suspicious, will quickly be corrupt.

Rambler.

HE that suffers by imposture has too often his virtue more impaired than his fortune. But as it is necessary not to invite robbery by supineness, so it is our duty not to suppress tenderness by suspicion. It is better to suffer wrong, than to do it; and happier to be sometimes cheated, than not to trust.

Rambler.

HE who is spontaneously suspicious, may be justly charged with radical corruption; for if he has not known the prevalence of dishonesty by information, nor had time to observe it with his own eyes, whence can he take his measures of judgment but from himself?

Rambler.

TEMPTATION

IT is a common plea of wickedness to call *temptation* destiny.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

TIME

TIME, amongst other injuries, diminishes the power of pleasing.

Rambler.

TIME ought, above all other kinds of property, to be free from invasion; and yet there is no man who does not claim the power of wasting that time which is the right of others.

Idler.

LIFE is continually ravaged by invaders; one steals away an hour, and another a day; one conceals the robbery by hurrying us into business, another by lulling us with amusement; the depredation is continued through a thousand vicissitudes of tumult and tranquillity, till, having lost all, we can lose no more.

Idler.

TO put every man in possession of his own time, and rescue the day from a succession of usurpers, is beyond hope; yet, perhaps, some stop might be put to this unmerciful persecution, if all would seriously reflect, that whoever pays a visit that is not desired, or talks longer than the hearer is willing to attend, is guilty of an injury which he cannot repair, and takes away that which he cannot give.

Idler.

TIME, with all its celerity, moves slowly to him whose whole employment is to watch its flight.

Idler.

TIME is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination.

Preface to Shakspeare.

HE that runs against time has an antagonist not subject to casualties.

Life of Pope.

TIME, like money, may be lost by unseasonable avarice.

Life of Burman.

TIME is the inflexible enemy of all false hypotheses.

Treatise on the Longitude.

TRAGEDY

THE reflection that strikes the heart at a tragedy, is not that the evils before us are *real* evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves, unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery; as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. In short, the delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Preface to Shakspeare.

TRAVELLING

IT is by studying at home that we must obtain the ability of travelling with intelligence and improvement.

Life of Gray.

ALL travel has its advantages: if the passenger visits better countries, he may learn to improve his own; and if fortune carries him to worse, he may learn to enjoy it.

Western Islands.

TRUTH

TRUTH has no gradations; nothing which admits of increase can be so much what it is—as *truth is truth*. There may be a *strange thing*, and a thing *more strange*. But if a proposition be *true*, there can be none *more true*.

MALICE often bears down truth.

Notes upon Shakespear.

TRUTH, like beauty, varies its fashions, and is best recommended by different dresses, to different minds.

Idler.

THERE is no crime more infamous than the violation of truth ; it is apparent that men can be sociable beings no longer than they can believe each other. When speech is employed only as the vehicle of falsehood, every man must disunite himself from others, inhabit his own cave, and seek prey only for himself.

Idler.

UNDERSTANDING

AS the mind must govern the hands, so in every society the man of intelligence must direct the man of labour.

Western Islands.

UNIVERSALITY

WHAT is fit for everything, can fit nothing well.

Life of Cowley.

VANITY

THE greatest human virtue bears no proportion to human vanity.

Rambler.

VAUNTING

LARGE offers, and sturdy rejections, are among the most common topics of falsehood.

Life of Milton.

VICE

VICES, like diseases, are often hereditary. The property of the one is to infect the manners, as the other poisons the springs of life.

Idler.

VIRTUE

HE who desires no virtue in his companion, has no virtue in himself. Hence, when the wealthy and the dissolute connect themselves with indigent companions, for their power of entertainment, their friendship amounts to little more than paying the reckoning for them. They only desire to drink and laugh; their fondness is without benevolence, and their familiarity without friendship.

Life of Otway.

MANY men mistake the love for the practice of virtue, and are not so much good men, as the friends of goodness.

Life of Savage.

VIRTUE is undoubtedly most laudable in that state which makes it most difficult.

Life of Savage.

VIRTUE is the surest foundation both of reputation and fortune, and the first step to greatness is to be honest.

Life of Drake.

WINE

IN the bottle, discontent seeks for comfort, cowardice for courage, and bashfulness for confidence ; but who ever asked succour from Bacchus, that was able to preserve himself from being enslaved by his auxiliary ?

Life of Addison.

WISDOM

THE two powers which, in the opinion of Epictetus, constitute a *wise man*, are those of *bearing* and *forbearing*.

Life of Savage.

WISDOM comprehends at once the end and the means, estimates easiness or difficulty, and is cautious or confident in due proportion.

Idler.

WIT

WIT is that which is at once natural and new, and which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just.

Life of Cowley.

WIT will never make a man rich, but there are places where riches will always make a wit.

Idler.

WIT, like every other power, has its boundaries. Its success depends on the aptitude of others to receive impressions; and that as some bodies, indissoluble by heat, can set the furnace and crucible at defiance, there are minds upon which the rays of fancy may be pointed without effect, and which no fire of sentiment can agitate, or exalt.

Rambler.

IT is a calamity incident to *grey-haired wit*, that his merriment is unfashionable. His allusions are forgotten facts, his illustrations are drawn from notions obscured by time, his wit therefore may be called *single*, such as none has any part in but himself.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

WIT, like all other things subject by their nature to the choice of man, has its changes and fashions, and at different times takes different forms.

Life of Cowley.

THE pride of wit and knowledge is often mortified, by finding that they confer no security against the common errors which mislead the weakest and meanest of mankind.

Rambler.

IT is common to find men break out into a rage at any insinuations to the disadvantage of their *wit*, who have borne with great patience *reflections on their morals*.

Rambler.

WIT being an unexpected copulation of ideas, the discovery of some occult relation between images in appearance remote from each other; an effusion of wit, therefore, presupposes an accumulation of knowledge; a memory stored with notions, which the imagination may cull out to compose new assemblages. Whatever may be the native vigour of the mind, she can never form many combinations from few ideas; as many changes can never be rung upon a few bells.

Rambler.

NOTHING was ever said with uncommon felicity, but by the co-operation of chance; and therefore *wit*, as well as valour, must be content to share its honours with fortune.

Idler.

WOMEN

WOMEN are always most observed, when they seem themselves least to observe, or to lay out for observation.

Rambler.

IT is observed, that the unvaried complaisance which women have a right of exacting, keeps them generally unskilled in human nature.

Rambler.

IT is said of a woman who accepts a worse match than those which she had refused, that she has passed through the *wood*, and at last has taken a *crooked stick*.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

NOTHING is more common than for the younger part of the sex, upon certain occasions, to say in a pet what they do not think, or to think for a time on what they do not finally resolve.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

IT may be particularly observed, of women, that they are for the most part good or bad, as they fall among those who practise vice or virtue; and that neither education nor reason gives them much security against the influence of example. Whether it be, that they have less courage to stand against

opposition, or that their desire of admiration makes them sacrifice their principles to the poor pleasure of worthless praise, it is certain, whatever be the cause, that female goodness seldom keeps its ground against laughter, flattery, or fashion.

Rambler.

OF women it has been always known, that no censure wounds so deeply, or rankles so long, as that which charges them with want of beauty.

Rambler.

WORDS

WORDS being arbitrary, must owe their power to association, and have the influence, and that only, which custom has given them.

Life of Cowley.

WORDS too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From these sounds, which we hear on small, or coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images; and words to which we are nearly strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on *themselves*, which they should convey to *things*.

Life of Dryden.

WRONG

THE power of doing *wrong* with impunity seldom waits long for the will.

Observations on the State of Affairs.

MEN are wrong for want of sense, but they are wrong by halves for want of spirit.

Taxation no Tyranny.

WRONGS

MEN easily forgive Wrongs which are not committed against themselves.

Notes upon Shakespeare.

YOUTH

YOUTH is the time in which the qualities of *modesty* and *enterprise* ought chiefly to be found. Modesty suits well with inexperience, and enterprise with health and vigour, and an extensive prospect of life.

Rambler.

YOUTH is the time of enterprise and hope: having yet no occasion for comparing our force with any opposing power, we naturally form presumptions in our own favour, and imagine that obstruction and impediment will give way before us.

Rambler.

YOUTH AND AGE

WHEN we are young we busy ourselves in forming schemes for succeeding time, and miss the gratifications that are before us; when we are old we amuse the languor of age with the recollection of youthful pleasures or performances; so that our life, of which no part is filled with the business of the present time, resembles our dreams after dinner, when the events of the morning are mingled with the designs of the evening.

Notes upon Shakspeare.

IN youth it is common to measure right and wrong by the opinion of the world, and in age to act without any measure but interest, and to lose shame without substituting virtue.

Rambler.

THE notions of the old and young are like liquors of different gravity and texture, which never can unite.

Rambler.



PART II

ANECDOTES



PART II

ANECDOTES



R. JOHNSON said to Boswell one morning when they were at Birmingham, 'You will see, sir, at Mr. Hector's, his sister, Mrs. Careless, a clergyman's widow. She was the first woman with whom I was in love. It dropped out of my head imperceptibly; but she and I shall always have a kindness for each other.' He laughed at the notion that a man can never really be in love but once, and considered it as a mere romantic fancy.

HE once in his life was known himself to have uttered what is called a *bull*. Sir Joshua Reynolds, when they were riding together in Devonshire, complained that he had a very bad horse, for that even when going down hill he moved slowly step by

step. 'Ay,' said Johnson, 'and when he *goes up hill*, he *stands still*.'

OF the father of one of his friends, he observed, 'He never clarified his notions by filtrating them through other minds; he had a canal upon his estate, where at one place the bank was too low--"I dug the canal deeper," said he.'

JOHNSON censured Gwyn for taking down a church, which might have stood many years, and building a new one at a different place, for no other reason, but that there might be a direct road to a new bridge; and his expression was, 'You are taking a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight line to the bridge.' GWYN: 'No, sir; I am putting the church *in* the way, that the people may not *go out of the way*.' JOHNSON (with a hearty loud laugh of approbation): 'Speak no more; rest your colloquial fame upon this.'

HE told Boswell that he went up to his library without mentioning it to his servant, when he wanted to study secure from interruption; for he would not allow his servant to say he was not at home, when he really was. 'A servant's strict regard for truth,' said he, 'must be weakened by such a practice. A philosopher may know,

that it is merely a form of denial ; but few servants are such nice distinguishers. If I accustom a servant to lie for *me*, have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell many lies for himself ?'

A QUAKER having objected to the 'observance of days, and months, and years,' Johnson answered, 'The church does not superstitiously observe days, merely as days, but as memorials of important facts. Christmas might be kept as well upon one day of the year as another ; but there should be a stated day for commemorating the birth of our Saviour, because there is danger that what may be done on any day will be neglected.'

SPEAKING of a dull tiresome fellow, whom he chanced to meet, he said, 'That fellow seems to me to possess but one idea, and that is a wrong one.'

A GENTLEMAN, having to some of the usual arguments for drinking, added this, 'You know, sir, drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable : would not you allow a man to drink for that reason ?' JOHNSON : 'Yes, sir, if he sat next *you*.'

HE was no admirer of blank verse, and said, 'It always fails, unless sustained by the dignity of the subject. In blank verse, the language suffers more distortion, to keep it out of prose, than any inconvenience or limitation to be apprehended from the shackles and circumspection of rhyme.'

TALKING of religious orders, he said, 'If convents should be allowed at all, they should only be retreats for persons unable to serve the public, or who have served it. It is our first duty to serve society; and after we have done that, we may attend wholly to the salvation of our own souls. A youthful passion for abstracted devotion should not be encouraged.'

BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*, he said, was the only book that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise.

SPEAKING of Mr. Hanway, who published *An Eight Days' Journey from London to Portsmouth*, 'Jonas,' said he, 'acquired some reputation by travelling abroad, but lost it all by travelling at home.'

JOHNSON, in high spirits one evening at the club, attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions. 'The *Tale of a Tub*

is so much superior to his other writings, that one can hardly believe he was the author of it; there is in it such a vigour of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life.' Boswell wondered to hear him say of *Gulliver's Travels*, 'When once you have thought of big men and little men, it is very easy to do all the rest.'

OF the celebrated dean of St. Patrick's Johnson said, 'Swift has a higher reputation than he deserves. His excellence is strong sense; for his humour, though very well, is not remarkably good. I doubt whether the *Tale of a Tub* be his; for he never owned it, and it is much above his usual manner.'

A GENTLEMAN, who had been very unhappy in marriage, married immediately after his wife died. Johnson said, 'It is the triumph of hope over experience.'

'WHEN I censured a gentleman of my acquaintance,' says Boswell, 'for marrying a second time, as it showed a disregard of his first wife, he said, "Not at all, sir. On the contrary, were he not to marry again, it might be concluded that his first wife had given him a disgust to marriage; but by taking a second wife, he pays the highest compliment to the first, by showing

that she made him so happy as a married man, that he wishes to be so a second time." So ingenious a turn did he give to this delicate question. And yet, on another occasion, he owned, that he once had almost asked a promise of Mrs. Johnson that she would not marry again, but had checked himself.'

M^{R.} SEWARD heard Johnson once say, that 'a man has a very bad chance for happiness in that state, unless he marries a woman of strong and fixed principles of religion.'

W^{HEN} Johnson saw some young ladies in Lincolnshire, who were remarkably well behaved, owing to their mother's strict discipline and severe correction, he exclaimed, in one of Shakespeare's lines, a little varied,

'Rod, I will honour thee for this thy duty.'

At a subsequent period, he observed to Dr. Rose, 'There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other.'

T^{HE} importance of strict and scrupulous veracity cannot be too often inculcated. Johnson was known to be so rigidly

attentive to it, that even in his common conversation the slightest circumstance was mentioned with exact precision. The knowledge of his having such a principle and habit made his friends have a perfect reliance on the truth of everything that he told, however it might have been doubted, if told by many others.

BESIDES tending to refute the notion of Johnson's bigotry, the following very liberal sentiment has the additional value of obviating an objection to our holy religion, founded upon the discordant tenets of Christians themselves: 'For my part, sir, I think all Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, agree in the essential articles, and that their differences are trivial, and rather political than religious.'

AT another time, he and Boswell talked of the Roman Catholic religion, and how little difference there was in essential matters between ours and it. JOHNSON: 'True, sir: all denominations of Christians have really little difference in point of doctrine, though they may differ widely in external forms. There is a prodigious difference between the external form of one of your Presbyterian churches in Scotland, and a church in Italy; yet the doctrine taught is essentially the same.'

WHEN Dr. Johnson had finished some part of his tragedy of *Irene*, he read what he had done to Mr. Walmsley, who objected to his having already brought his heroine into great distress; and asked him, 'How can you possibly contrive to plunge her into deeper calamity?' Johnson, in sly allusion to the supposed oppressive proceedings of the court of which Mr. Walmsley was registrar, replied, 'Sir, I can put her into the spiritual court!'

SOON after Edwards's *Canons of Criticism* came out, Johnson was dining at Tonson the bookseller's, with Hayman the painter, and some more company. Hayman related to Sir Joshua Reynolds that the conversation having turned upon Edwards's book, the gentlemen praised it much, and Johnson allowed its merit: but when they went farther, and appeared to put that author upon a level with Warburton, 'Nay,' said Johnson, 'he has given him some smart hits to be sure; but there is no proportion between the two men; they must not be named together. A fly, sir, may sting a stately horse, and make him wince; but one is but an insect, and the other is a horse still.'

DR. BURNEY having remarked, that Mr. Garrick was begining to look old, Johnson said, 'Why, sir, you are not to

wonder at that ; no man's face has had more wear and tear.'

'SIR, I do not think Gray a first-rate poet. He has not a bold imagination, nor much command of words. The obscurity in which he has involved himself will not persuade us that he is sublime. His *Elegy in a Churchyard* has a happy selection of images, but I don't like what are called his great things. His ode, which begins

Ruin seize thee, ruthless king !

Confusion on thy banners wait !

has been celebrated for its abruptness, and plunging into the subject all at once. But such arts as these have no merit, unless when they are original.'

HE did not approve of late marriages, observing, that more was lost in point of time, than compensated for by any possible advantages. Even ill-assorted marriages were preferable to cheerless celibacy.

ONE Sunday, Boswell dined with him at Mr. Hoole's. They talked of Pope. JOHNSON : 'He wrote his *Dunciad* for fame ; that was his primary motive. Had it not been for that, the dunces might have railed against him till they were weary, without his troubling himself about them. He

delighted to vex them, no doubt; but he had more delight in seeing how well he could vex them.'

DR. GOLDSMITH'S new play, *She Stoops to Conquer*, being mentioned—JOHNSON: 'I know of no comedy, for many years, that has so much exhilarated an audience—that has answered so much the great end of comedy—making an audience merry.'

'THE Beggar's Opera,' and the common question, whether it is pernicious in its effects, having been introduced in conversation—JOHNSON: 'As to this matter, which has been very much contested, I myself am of opinion, that more influence has been ascribed to *The Beggar's Opera* than it, in reality, ever had; for I do not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by being present at its representation. At the same time, I do not deny, that it may have some influence, by making the character of a rogue familiar, and in some degree pleasing.'

OF London, Johnson observed, 'Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of the city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable

little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists.'

BOSWELL talked of the cheerfulness of Fleet Street, owing to the constant quick succession of people which we perceive passing through it. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, Fleet Street has a very animated appearance; but I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross.'

HE related the following minute anecdote of this period: 'In the last age, when my mother lived in London, there were two sets of people, those who gave the wall, and those who took it; the peaceable and the quarrelsome. When I returned to Lichfield, after having been in London, my mother asked me, whether I was one of those that gave the wall, or those who took it. *Now* it is fixed that every man keeps to the right; or, if one is taking the wall, another yields it; and it is never a dispute.'

HE said, 'Get as much force of mind as you can. Live within your income. Always have something saved at the end of the year. Let your imports be more than your exports, and you'll never go far wrong.'

ONE Sunday, Boswell told him he had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers, where he heard a woman preach. JOHNSON: 'Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs; it is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all.'

DR. ADAMS found him one day busy at his Dictionary, when the following dialogue ensued:—ADAMS: 'This is a great work, sir: how are you to get all the etymologies?' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, here is a shelf with Junius, and Skinner, and others: and there is a Welsh gentleman who has published a collection of Welsh proverbs, who will help me with the Welsh.' ADAMS: 'But, sir, how can you do this in three years?' JOHNSON: 'Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years.' ADAMS: 'But the French Academy, which consists of forty members, took forty years to compile their Dictionary.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, thus it is; this is the proportion: let me see—forty times forty is sixteen hundred: as three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman.'

JOHNSON informed Boswell that he made the bargain for Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, and the price was sixty pounds.

‘And sir,’ said he, ‘a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveller*; and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after *The Traveller* had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money.’

A PENSION of two hundred pounds a year having been given to Sheridan, Johnson, who thought slightly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing it, exclaimed, ‘What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine.’ Whether this proceeded from a momentary indignation, as if it were an affront to his exalted merit that a player should be rewarded in the same manner with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of peevishness, it was unluckily said, and indeed cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him, not as a player, but as a sufferer in the cause of Government, when he was manager of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties ran high in 1753: and it must also be allowed that he was a man of literature, and had considerably improved the arts of reading and speaking with distinctness and propriety.

Johnson afterwards complained that a man who disliked him, repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan, without telling him what followed, which was, that after a pause, he added, 'However, I am glad that he has a pension, for he is a very good man.'

AN essay, written by Mr. Deane, a divine of the Church of England, maintaining the future life of brutes by an explication of certain parts of the Scriptures, was mentioned, and the doctrine insisted on by a gentleman, who seemed fond of curious speculation. Johnson, who did not like to hear of anything concerning a future state, which was not authorised by the regular canons of orthodoxy, discouraged this talk; and being offended at its continuation, he watched an opportunity to give the gentleman a blow of reprehension. So, when the poor speculatist, with a serious metaphysical pensive face, addressed him, 'But really, sir, when we see a very sensible dog, we don't know what to think of him,'—Johnson, rolling with joy at the thought which beamed in his eye, turned quickly round, and replied, 'True, sir; and when we see a very foolish *fellow*, we don't know what to think of *him*.' He then rose up, strode to the fire, and stood for some time laughing and exulting.

TALKING of an acquaintance, whose narratives, which abounded in curious and interesting topics, were unhappily found to be very fabulous, Boswell mentioned Lord Mansfield's having said to him, 'Suppose we believe one *half* of what he tells.' JOHNSON: 'Ay; but we don't know *which* half to believe. By his lying we lose, not only our reverence for him, but all comfort in his conversation.' BOSWELL: 'May we not take it as an amusing fiction?' JOHNSON: 'Sir, the misfortune is, that you will insensibly believe as much of it as you incline to believe.'

MRS. THRALE disputed with him on the merit of Prior. He attacked him powerfully; said he wrote of love like a man who had never felt it; his love verses were college verses; and he repeated the song 'Alexis shunn'd his fellow swains,' etc., in so ludicrous a manner, as to make us all wonder how any one could have been pleased with such fantastical stuff. Mrs. Thrale stood to her gun with great courage, in defence of amorous ditties, which Johnson despised, till he at last silenced her by saying, 'My dear lady, talk no more of this: nonsense can be defended but by nonsense.'

WHEN the messenger, who carried the last sheet of Johnson's Dictionary to Millar, returned, Johnson asked him, 'Well, what did he say?' 'Sir,' answered the messenger, 'he said, "Thank God, I have done with him."' 'I am glad,' replied Johnson, with a smile, 'that he thanks God for anything.'

AT a gentleman's seat in the west of England, in order to amuse him till dinner should be ready, he was taken out to walk in the garden. The master of the house, thinking it proper to introduce something scientific into the conversation, addressed him thus: 'Are you a botanist, Dr. Johnson?' 'No, sir,' answered Johnson, 'I am not a botanist; and (alluding, no doubt, to his near-sightedness) should I wish to become a botanist, I must first turn myself into a reptile.'

THE 'worthy' Duke of Queensberry, as Thomson, in his *Seasons*, justly characterises him, told Boswell, that when Gay showed him *The Beggar's Opera*, his grace's observation was, 'This is a very odd thing, Gay; I am satisfied that it is either a very good thing or a very bad thing.' It proved the former, beyond the warmest expectations of the author or his friends. Mr. Cambridge, however, mentioned, that

there was good reason enough to doubt concerning its success. He was told by Quin, that during the first night of its appearance it was long in a very dubious state ; that there was a disposition to damn it, and that it was saved by the song,

O, ponder well ! be not severe !

the audience being much affected by the innocent looks of Polly, when she came to those two lines, which exhibit at once a painful and ridiculous image,

For on the rope that hangs my dear,
Depends poor Polly's life.

Quin himself had so bad an opinion of it, that he refused the part of Captain Macheath ; and gave it to Walker, who acquired great celebrity by his grave, yet animated performance of it.

HE communicated to Boswell the following particulars upon the subject of his religious progress. 'I fell into an inattention to religion, or an indifference about it, in my ninth year. The church at Lichfield, in which we had a seat, wanted reparation ; so I was to go and find a seat in other churches ; and, having bad eyes, and being awkward about this, I used to go and read in the fields on Sunday. This habit continued till my fourteenth

year; and still I find a great reluctance to go to church. I then became a sort of lax *talker* against religion, for I did not much *think* against it; and this lasted till I went to Oxford, where it would not be *suffered*. When at Oxford, I took up Law's *Serious Call to a Holy Life*, expecting to find it a dull book (as such books generally are), and, perhaps, to laugh at it. But I found Law quite an overmatch for me; and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest of religion, after I became capable of rational inquiry.'

AT Mr. Thrale's, one evening, Johnson had defended the propriety of recording in biography the weaknesses of human nature. Next morning, while at breakfast, he gave a very earnest recommendation of what he himself practised with the utmost conscientiousness—a strict attention to truth, even in the most minute particulars. 'Accustom your children,' said he, 'constantly to this; if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation from truth will end.' BOSWELL: 'It may come to the door; and when once an account is at all varied in one circumstance, it may by degrees be varied so as to be totally different from what really

happened.' Their lively hostess, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgeted at this, and ventured to say, 'Nay, this is too much. If Mr. Johnson should forbid me to drink tea, I would comply, as I should feel the restraint only twice a day; but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a day, if one is not perpetually watching.' JOHNSON: 'Well, madam, and you *ought* to be perpetually watching. It is more from carelessness about truth, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world.'

BOSWELL having expressed his regret that Goldsmith would, upon every occasion, endeavour to shine, by which he often exposed himself. LANGTON: 'He is not like Addison, who was content with the fame of his writings; he did not aim also at excellence in conversation, for which he found himself unfit; and said to a lady, who complained of his having talked little in company, "Madam, I have but ninepence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds."' BOSWELL: 'Goldsmith has a great deal of gold in his cabinet; but not content with this, he is always taking out his purse.' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir, and that so often an empty purse!'

Of the same celebrated author, Johnson said, 'He is not an agreeable companion,

for he talks always for fame: a man who does so never can be pleasing. The man who talks to unburthen his mind is the man to delight you. An eminent friend of ours is not so agreeable as the variety of his knowledge would otherwise make him, because he talks partly from ostentation.'

Again: 'The misfortune of Goldsmith in conversation is this—he goes on without knowing how he is to get off. His genius is great, but his knowledge is small. As they say of a generous man, it is a pity he is not rich, we may say of Goldsmith, it is a pity he is not knowing: he would not keep his knowledge to himself.'

And on another occasion: 'Goldsmith should not be for ever attempting to shine in conversation: he has not temper for it, he is so much mortified when he fails.'

JOHNSON praised John Bunyan highly. 'His *Pilgrim's Progress* has great merit both for invention, imagination, and the conduct of the story: and it has had the best evidence of its merit, the general and continued approbation of mankind: few books, I believe, have had a more extensive sale. It is remarkable that it begins very much like the poem of Dante; yet there was no translation of Dante when Bunyan wrote. There is reason to think that he had read Spenser.'

SOME of the company expressed a wonder, why the author of so excellent a book as the *Whole Duty of Man* should conceal himself. JOHNSON: 'There may be different reasons assigned for this, any one of which would be very sufficient. He may have been a clergyman, and may have thought that his religious counsels would have less weight when known to come from a man whose profession was theology. He may have been a man whose practice was not suitable to his principles; so that his character might injure the effect of his book, which he had written in a season of penitence. Or, he may have been a man of rigid self-denial; so that he would have no reward for his pious labours while in this world, but refer it all to a future state.'

HE talked of Isaac Walton's *Lives*, which was one of his most favourite books: Dr. Donne's Life, he said, was the most perfect of them. He observed, that 'it was wonderful that Walton, who was in a very low situation in life, should have been familiarly received by so many great men, and that at a time when the ranks of society were kept more separate than they are now.'

FIELDING being mentioned, Johnson exclaimed, 'He was a blockhead': and, upon Boswell's expressing his astonish-

ment at so strange an assertion, he said, 'What I mean by being a blockhead is, that he was a barren rascal.' BOSWELL: 'Will you not allow, sir, that he draws very natural pictures of human life?' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, it is of very low life. Richardson used to say, that had he not known who Fielding was, he should have believed he was an ostler. Sir, there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's, than in all *Tom Jones*. I, indeed, never read *Joseph Andrews*.' ERSKINE: 'Surely, sir, Richardson is very tedious.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted, that you would hang yourself; but you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving occasion to the sentiment.'



PART III

ESTIMATES OF AUTHORS



PART III

ESTIMATES OF AUTHORS

ADDISON



R. ADDISON to be sure was a great man ; his learning was not profound ; but his morality, his humour, and his elegance of writing set him very high.

ARBUTHNOT

I THINK Dr. Arbuthnot the first man among the eminent writers in Queen Anne's time. He was the most universal genius, being an excellent physician, a man of deep learning, and a man of much humour.

ASCHAM

HADDON and Ascham, the pride of Elizabeth's reign, however they have succeeded in prose, no sooner attempt verse than they provoke derision.

BACON

BACON, in writing his history of Henry VII., does not seem to have consulted any record, but to have taken what he found in other histories, and blended it with what he learned by tradition.

BLACKMORE

HIS name was so long used to point every epigram upon dull writers, that it became at last a byword of contempt.

BOLINGBROKE

SIR, he was a scoundrel and a coward: a scoundrel for discharging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward because he had not resolution to fire it off himself, but left half a crown to a beggarly Scotsman (Mallet) to draw the trigger after his death.

BOSWELL

BOSWELL in the year 1745 was a fine boy, wore a white cockade and prayed for King James, till one of his uncles gave him a shilling, on condition that he would pray for King George, which he accordingly did. *So you see that Whigs of all ages are made the same way.*

BROWNE

HIS style strikes, but does not please; his tropes are hard, and his combinations uncouth. . . . His innovations are sometimes pleasing, and his temerities happy It is on his own writings that Browne is to depend for the esteem of posterity, of which he shall not be easily deprived while learning shall have any reverence among men.

BUNYAN

HIS *Pilgrim's Progress* has great merit, both for invention, imagination, and the conduct of the story; and it has had the best evidence of its merit, the general and continued approbation of mankind. Few books, I believe, have had a more extensive sale. It is remarkable that it begins very much like the poem of Dante; yet there was no translation of Dante when Bunyan wrote. There is reason to think that he had read Spenser.

BURNET

BURNET'S *History of his own Times* is very entertaining. The style indeed is mere chit-chat. I do not believe that Burnet intentionally lied; but he was so

much prejudiced that he took no pains to find out the truth. He is like a man who is resolved to regulate his time by a certain watch, but will not inquire whether the watch be right or not.

BUTLER

THERE is in *Hudibras* a great deal of bullion that will always last. But to be sure the highest strokes of his wit owed their force to the impression of the characters which was upon men's minds at the time, to their knowing them at table and in the street, in being familiar with them, and, above all, to his satire being directed against those whom a little while before they had hated and feared.

CHATTERTON

THIS is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things.

CHESTERFIELD

THIS man, I thought, had been a lord among wits; but I find he is only a wit among lords.

COLLINS

MR. COLLINS was a man of extensive literature and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly on works of fiction and subjects of fancy; and, by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens.

CONGREVE

HIS scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion; his personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike. His comedies have therefore in some degree the operation of tragedies; they surprise rather than divert, and raise admiration rather than merriment. But they are the works of a mind replete with images and quick in combinations.

COWLEY

IN the general review of Cowley's poetry, it will be found that he wrote with abundant fertility, but negligent or unskilful selection ; with much thought, but with little imagery ; that he is never pathetic and rarely sublime ; but always either ingenious or learned, either acute or profound.

DE FOE

NOBODY ever laid down the book of *Robinson Crusoe* without wishing it longer.

DENHAM

HE is one of the writers that improved our taste, and advanced our language ; and whom therefore we ought to read with gratitude, though, having done much, he left much to do.

DONNE

A MAN of very extensive and various knowledge.

DRYDEN

OF Dryden's works it was said by Pope that 'he could select from them better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English writer could supply.' Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such a variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we were taught *sapere et fari*, to think naturally and express forcibly.

FENTON

OF his morals and his conversation the account is uniform; he was never named but with praise and fondness, as a man in the highest degree amiable and excellent. Such was the character given of him by the Earl of Orrery, his pupil; such is the testimony of Pope; and such were the suffrages of all who could boast of his acquaintance.

FIELDING

SIR, he was a blockhead.

GAY

WE owe to Gay the ballad opera, a mode of comedy which at first was supposed only to delight by its novelty, but has now, by the experience of half a century, been found so well accommodated to the disposition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long possession of the stage. Whether this new drama was the product of judgment or luck, the praise of wit must be given to the inventor; and there are many writers read with more reverence, to whom such merits of originality cannot be attributed.

GOLDSMITH

NO man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had.

GRAY

SIR, I don't think Gray a first-rate poet. He has not a bold imagination, nor much command of words. The obscurity in which he has involved himself will not persuade us that he is sublime.

JONSON

WHEN Jonson came, instructed from
the school

To please in method, and invent by rule ;
His studious patience and laborious art
By regular approach essay'd the heart.
Cold approbation gave the lingering bays
For those who durst not censure, scarce
could praise.

A mortal born, he met the general doom,
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.

JUNIUS

I SHOULD have believed Burke to be
Junius, because I knew no man but
Burke who is capable of writing these
Letters ; but Burke spontaneously denied it
to me. The case would have been different,
had I asked him if he was the author ; a man
so questioned, as to anonymous publication,
may think he has a right to deny it.

MILTON

MILTON, madam, was a genius that
could cut a Colossus from a rock,
but could not carve heads upon cherry-
stones.

MONTAGU

OF him, who from a poet, became a patron of poets, it will be readily believed that the works would not miss of celebration. Addison began to praise him early, and was followed or accompanied by other poets; perhaps by all except Swift and Pope, who forbore to flatter him in his life, and after his death spoke of him, Swift with slight censure, and Pope, in the character of Bufo, with acrimonious contempt.

MONTAGU, MRS.

MRS. MONTAGU does not make a trade of her wit; but Mrs. Montagu is a very extraordinary woman; she has a constant stream of conversation, and it is always impregnated, it has always a meaning.

OTWAY

OTWAY had not much cultivated versification, nor much replenished his mind with general knowledge. His principal power was in moving the passions, to which Dryden in his latter years left an illustrious testimony. He appears, by some of his verses, to have been a zealous loyalist, and had what was in those times the common reward of loyalty; he lived and died neglected.

PARNELL

THE general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehension or fertility of mind. Of the little that appears still less is his own. His praise must be derived from the easy sweetness of his diction ; in his verse there is more happiness than pains ; he is sprightly without effort, and always delights though he never ravishes ; everthing is proper, yet everything seems casual. If there is some appearance of elaboration in *The Hermit*, the narrative, as it is less airy, is less pleasing.

POPE

AFTER all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, whether Pope was a poet ? otherwise than by asking in return, if Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found ? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past ; let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry ; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed.

PRIOR

I MENTIONED Lord Hales' censure of Prior in his preface to a collection of sacred poems, by various hands, published by him at Edinburgh a great many years ago, where he mentions 'these impure tales which will be the eternal opprobrium of their ingenious author.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, Lord Hales has forgot. There is nothing in Prior that will excite to lewdness. If Lord Hales thinks there is, he must be more combustible than other people.' I instanced the tale of 'Paulo Purganti and his Wife.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, there is nothing there but that his wife wanted to be kissed, when poor Paulo was out of pocket. No, sir, Prior is a lady's book. No lady is ashamed to have it standing in her library.'

ROSCOMMON

HE is the only correct writer in verse before Addison.

ROWE

WHENCE has Rowe his reputation? From the reasonableness and propriety of some of his schemes, from the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse. He seldom moves either piety or

terror ; but he often elevates the sentiments ; he seldom pierces the breast, but he always delights the ear, and often improves the understanding.

SAVAGE

THOUGH he may not be altogether secure against the objections of the critics, it must, however, be acknowledged that his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical ; and, what many writers who have been more lavishly applauded cannot boast, that they have an original air which has no resemblance of any foregoing writer, that the versification and sentiments have a cast peculiar to themselves, which no man can imitate with success, because what was nature in Savage would in another be affectation.

SHAKESPEARE

THE merit of Shakespeare is such as the ignorant can take in and the learned add nothing to.

EACH change of many-colour'd life he drew :

Exhausted worlds and then imagined new ;
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting time toil'd after him in vain.

SHENSTONE

HIS mind was not very comprehensive, nor his curiosity active; he had no value for those parts of knowledge which he had not himself cultivated.

SHERIDAN

HE who has written the two best comedies of his age is surely a considerable man.

STERNE

JOHNSON: 'Any man who has a name or who has the power of pleasing will be very generally invited in London. The man Sterne, I have been told, has had engagements for three months.' GOLDSMITH: 'And a very dull fellow.' JOHNSON: 'Why, no, sir.'

SWIFT

SWIFT is clear, but shallow. In coarse humour he is inferior to Arbuthnot; in delicate humour he is inferior to Addison. So he is inferior to his contemporaries, without putting him against the whole world.

TEMPLE

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE was the first writer who gave cadence to English prose. Before his time they were careless of arrangement, and did not mind whether a sentence ended with an important word or an insignificant word; or with what part of speech it was concluded.

THOMSON

THOMSON had a true poetical genius, the power of viewing everything in a poetical light. His fault is such a cloud of words sometimes that the sense can hardly peep through. Sheils, who compiled *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*, was one day sitting with me. I took down Thomson and read aloud a large portion of him, and then asked, 'Is not this fine?' Sheils having expressed the highest admiration, 'Well, sir,' said I, 'I have omitted every other line.'

WALLER

HE added something to our elegance of diction, and something to our propriety of thought.

WARBURTON

HE was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited inquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his imagination nor clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught, together with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him a haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against the advocate the wishes of some who favoured the cause.

YOUNG

OF Young's poems it is difficult to give any general character, for he has no uniformity of manner; one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early and continued long; and at different times had different modes of political excellence in view. His numbers are

sometimes smooth and sometimes rugged ; his style is sometimes concatenated and sometimes abrupt ; sometimes diffusive and sometimes concise. His plans seem to have started in his mind at the present moment ; and his thoughts appear the effect of chance, sometimes adverse, and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgment.





PART I.—SUBJECT INDEX

- ABILITY, 1.
Actions, 1.
Adversity, 1.
Advice, 2.
Affectation, 2.
Age, 3. *See also* Youth.
Anticipation, 3.
Aphorisms, 4.
Apparitions, 4.
Army, 5.
Authorship, 5.
Avarice, 6.
- BEAUTY, 6.
Benevolence, 7.
Books, 8.
Breeding, 8.
Burlesque, 8.
Business, 9.
- CALAMITY, 10.
Censure, 10.
Change, 10.
Character, 10.
Charity, 11.
Civility, 12.
- Clerical life, 12.
Complaint, 13.
Conjecture, 13.
Contempt, 13.
Content, 13.
Courage, 14.
Credulity, 14.
Criticism, 15.
Cunning, 16.
Curiosity, 16.
Custom, 17.
- DEATH, 18.
Deception, 18.
Deception, Self-, 19.
Dependence, 19.
Desire, 20.
Devotion, 20.
Difficulty, 21.
Diligence, 21.
Disguise, 21.
Duplicity, 21.
Duty, 21.
- EDUCATION, 22.
Employment, 23.

Emulation, 23.
 Enquiry, 23.
 Envy, 24. *See also*
 Pride.
 Equality, 24.
 Error, 24.
 Esteem, 24.
 Evil, 24.
 Example, 25.
 Excellence, 26.
 Expectation, 26.

FAME, 26.
 Fancy, 27. *See also*
 Reason.
 Favour, 27.
 Fear, 27.
 Flattery, 28.
 Folly, 29.
 Foppery, 29.
 Forgiveness, 29.
 Fortune, 30.
 Friendship, 30.

GAMING, 32.
 Genius, 32.
 Ghosts, 33.
 Gluttony, 34.
 Good-humour, 34.
 Good - humour and
 Gaiety, 35.
 Good, Universal, 35.
 Government, 36.
 Government, Self-, 36.
 Greatness, 36.

Grief, 37.
 Guilt, 37.

HABITS, 37.
 Happiness, 37.
 Helplessness, 38.
 Historians, 39.
 Hope, 39.

IDLENESS, 40. *See also*
 Poverty.
 Ignorance, 41.
 Ignorance and Con-
 fidence, 41.
 Ignorance and Know-
 ledge, 41.
 Imagination, 42.
 Imitation, 42.
 Imposition, 43.
 Incivility, 44.
 Inconstancy, 44.
 Industry, 44.
 Innocence, 44.
 Insult, 45.
 Intellectual labour, 45.
 Irish and Scotch, 45.
 Irresolution, 46.

Joy, 46.
 Judgment, 46.
 Justice, 46. *See also*
 Prudence.

KNOWLEDGE, 47.

LANGUAGE, 47.
 Language, English, 49.
 Law, the, 49.
 Lawyers, 50.
 Learning, 51.
 Liberty, 52.
 Life, 52.
 Literature, 53.
 Living over again, 54.
 Loyalty, 54.

MALICE, 54.
 Man, 55.
 Manners, 55.
 Marriage, 56.
 Memory, 56.
 Merit, 57.
 Method, 57.
 Mind, 57.
 Mirth, 58.
 Misfortunes, 59.
 Money, 59.

NOVELTY, 60.
 Numbers, 60.

OBLIGATION, 60.
 Opinion, 61.
 Opportunity, 61.

PAIN, 61.
 Patriot, 62.
 Peevishness, 62.
 People, 63.
 Perfection, 63.

Perfidy, 64.
 Pity, 64.
 Pleasure, 65.
 Poets and Poetry, 66.
 Politeness, 67.
 Politics, 69.
 Poverty, 69.
 Poverty and Idleness,
 70. *See also* Idle-
 ness.
 Praise, 70.
 Precipitancy, 71.
 Prejudice, 71.
 Pride, 71.
 Pride and Envy, 72.
 See also Envy.
 Propriety, 72.
 Prosperity, 72.
 Providence, 73.
 Prudence, 73.
 Prudence and Justice,
 73.

RAILLERY, 74.
 Reading, 74.
 Reason and Fancy, 75.
 Rebellion, 75.
 Religion, 76.
 Reproof, 77.
 Resolution, 77.
 Respect, 78.
 Retaliation, 78.
 Retirement, 78.
 Retrospection, 78.
 Revenge, 80.
 Rhyme, 80.

Riches, 81.
Riches and Understanding, 83.

SATIRE, 83.
Scotch. *See* Irish.
Secrecy, 83.
Secrets, 84.
Seduction, 85.
Sense, Good-, 85.
Shame, 86.
Singularity, 86.
Solitude, 87.
Study, 87.
Style, 87.
Sublimity, 88.
Subordination, 88.
Suspicion, 88.

TEMPTATION, 89.
Time, 89.
Tragedy, 91.

Travelling, 92.
Truth, 92.

UNDERSTANDING, 93.
See also Riches.
Universality, 93.

VANITY, 93.
Vaunting, 93.
Vice, 94.
Virtue, 94.

WINE, 95.
Wisdom, 95.
Wit, 95.
Women, 98.
Words, 99.
Wrong, 100.
Wrongs, 100.

YOUTH, 100.
Youth and Age, 101.

PART II.—INDEX NOMINUM

ADAMS, Dr., 116.
Addison, 123.

BOSWELL, 107, 109, 111,
113, 115, 116, 119, 121,
122, 123, 126.
Bunyan, 124.
Burney, Dr., 112.
Burton, 108.

CAMBRIDGE, 120.
Careless, Mrs., 105.

DANTE, 124.
Deane, Rev. Mr., 118.
Donne, Dr., 125.

ERSKINE, 126.

FIELDING, 125.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| GARRICK, 112 | Prior, 119. |
| Gay, 120. | QUEENSBERRY, 120. |
| Goldsmith, 114, 117, | Quin, 121. |
| 123, 124. | |
| Gray, 113. | REYNOLDS, SIR JOSHUA, |
| Gwyn, 106. | 105, 112. |
| | Richardson, 126. |
| HANWAY, 108. | Rose, Dr., 110. |
| Hayman, 112. | |
| Hector, 105. | SEWARD, 110. |
| Hoole, 113. | Sheridan, 117, 118. |
| | Spenser, 124. |
| LANGTON, 123. | Swift, 108. |
| Law, 122. | |
| | THOMSON, 120. |
| MACHEATH, Captain, | Thrale, Mrs., 119, 122. |
| 121. | Tonson, 112. |
| Mansfield, Lord, 119. | |
| Millar, publisher, 120. | WALMSLEY, 112. |
| | Walton, Isaac, 125. |
| POPE, 113. | |

PART III.—INDEX NOMINUM

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| ADDISON, 129. | Bunyan, 131. |
| Arbuthnot, 129. | Burnet, 131. |
| Ascham, 129. | Butler, 132. |
| | |
| BACON, 130. | CHATTERTON, 132. |
| Blackmore, 130. | Chesterfield, 132. |
| Bolingbroke, 130. | Collins, 133. |
| Boswell, 130. | Congreve, 133. |
| Browne, 131. | Cowley, 134. |

DE FOE, 134.
Denham, 134.
Donne, 134.
Dryden, 135.

FENTON, 135.
Fielding, 135.

GAY, 136.
Goldsmith, 136.
Gray, 136.

JONSON, 137.
Junius, 137.

MILTON, 137.
Montagu, 138.
Montagu, Mrs., 138.

OTWAY, 138.

PARNELL, 139.
Pope, 139.
Prior, 140.

ROSCOMMON, 140.
Rowe, 140.

SAVAGE, 141.
Shakespeare, 141.
Shenstone, 142.
Sheridan, 142.
Sterne, 142.
Swift, 142.

TEMPLE, 143.
Thomson, 143.

WALLER, 143.
Warburton, 144.

YOUNG, 144.





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